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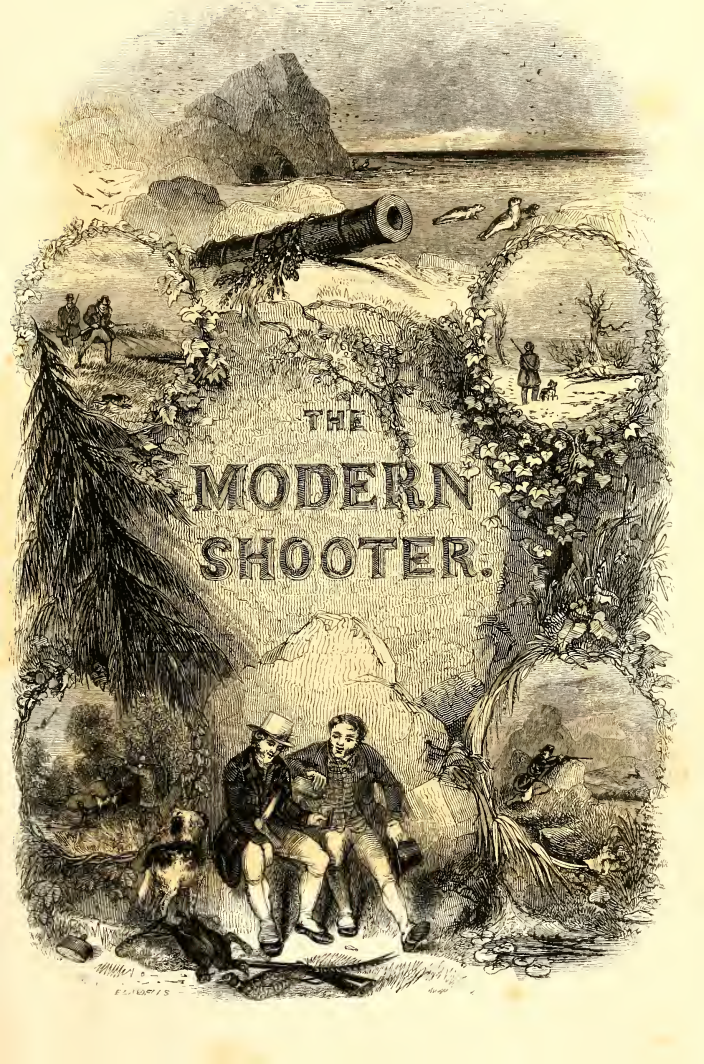
THE
MODERN
SHOOTER.

THE

MODERN SHOOTER:

CONTAINING

PRACTICAL INSTRUCTIONS AND DIRECTIONS

FOR EVERY DESCRIPTION OF

INLAND AND COAST SHOOTING.

BY

CAPTAIN LACY.

" Form'd on the Samian school, or those of Ind,
There are who think these pastimes scarce humane:
Yet, in my mind (and not relentless I),
His life is pure that wears no fouler stain."

ARMSTRONG.

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INTRODUCTION.

"Quæque ipse vidi—et quorum pars fui."

Few shooters have followed the diversion, in its various forms, with more regularity, more enthusiastic ardour, or, perhaps, with more attentive observation than myself, for a long series of years; not many, it may be, have pursued it with less varied success; nor have my speculations been confined to the *pleasurable* part, merely, of this fascinating recreation;—no! I have cheerfully courted, and have as cheerfully submitted (*labor ipse voluptas*) to the onerous drudgeries connected with it, in order to ensure to myself and my friends its highest pitch of perfection, and consequent enjoyment. If I have luxuriated in Highland sports, or, in my light canoe, have glided over

"The tender azure of the unruffled deep,"

I have also fired away—that is, have sacrificed to experiment—many a hundred proof, and above proof, charges, with guns of all sizes, at many a dull target, on many a burning sultry day,—as many a stunned ear, and many a swollen shoulder, could many a time have testified; to say nothing of vast expense and labour, in these and in other experiments relative to guns and shooting. In appearing, therefore, before a public tribunal, whatever diffidence I may entertain on other accounts, I feel that I am no visionary theorist, obtruding my ideas upon my brother sportsmen, without having first availed myself of the opportunity, at least, of profiting by that

experience which is said to make even a fool wise. I profess not to be—am not—a man of science; but solicit attention to my "Practical Instructions," as *a practical shot.* I feel, with a late highly esteemed author, that "the mind which has been pretty exclusively devoted to a favourite pursuit, is unable to persuade itself that its powers, however feeble, have been concentrated in vain; since the faintest rays, when collected into a focus, are capable of producing some degree of illumination."

As there are some circumstances, both peculiar and sporting-like, attending my origin and ancestry, a brief narrative of these may be, perhaps, not altogether an inappropriate introduction of the MODERN SHOOTER to his readers.

I am, then, descended from a lady, who gave birth to the progeny whence I trace my line, *after she had been buried alive!*

It is not every one who can say that he ever had the pleasure of shaking hands with his great grandfather; whereas I was, in great measure, brought up by mine, who, in his day —and that was a brilliant one, for *then* lived

> "The good Old English gentleman,
> All of the olden time!"—

was a crack whist and billiard player; shot, coursed, hunted, kept race-horses, and, in short, was "at all in the ring." Well do I recollect, when he was fast verging on his second childhood, whilst I was barely in my first, how he would take me on his knee, and, with all the garrulity natural to persons of his age, would minutely lay down the principles of "dieting" a greyhound, sweating a "running" horse, loading "a fowling-piece," "breaking the old English spaniel;" together with a scientific dissertation on "*hedging,*" on "the long odds," and "how to lay your money," &c. &c. After these

> "my grand-dad's narratives,"

I ask you, reader, was it possible the lad should become aught but a sportsman? Accordingly, I began well. It is said to be "an ill wind that blows nothing to nobody;" so, one day

—for we resided close to the sea—a north-easter brought to the shore an old rusty carbine: this was picked up by one Johnson, a carpenter, and a capital duck shot; who, knowing that my eyes always sparkled at the sight of a gun, very liberally offered it to me for eight shillings; promising, moreover, to scour it bright with sand-paper, and, with the aid of the village Vulcan, who was a very clever fellow, to put it in trim for me. Eight shillings is no trifling sum for a lad, who was not then as many years old, to raise. Under some plea, however, I now forget what,—but, if the truth must be told, it most certainly was *not* to purchase A GUN!—I scraped the money together, and thus became the felicitous owner of my first gun! "There!" said Johnson, as he handed over to me the little wreck, "there's a prime little piece, Master Richard! it's just the very thing for you; and I shouldn't like to be a duck in your way, after a bit." For some time I shot "on the sly," and obtained much praise for my early rising, and the long walks I took every morning, "Sundays excepted," as it was considered beneficial to my health; "Pepper," an excellent terrier, who would retrieve, ever and anon accompanying me on my shooting excursions. But one day I had the good luck to shoot a woodcock and a couple of snipes!! There are times when little hearts get too big for little bodies; and knowing that my dear great grand-dad dearly loved both sorts, I resolved upon taking a very bold step indeed! Accordingly, I no sooner reached home than into his room I rushed, full of

"emotions both of hope and fear,"

and, holding up the three birds with my left hand, whilst I carefully concealed the gun behind me with my right, I exclaimed, with an air of boyish exultation, "I shot these MYSELF, grandpapa!"

I shall never forget the blended astonishment and delight depicted on the old man's countenance, as he thus exclaimed: "What! *you* shot them! pray how, and where?" "With MY little gun!" replied I, bringing forward, at the same

time, "the *prime* little piece, just *the very thing for you*, Master Richard!" From that day forward I was regularly entrusted with a gun; my venerable great grandsire insisting upon it, that "a lad who was competent to shoot snipes, was also able to take care of the instrument with which he shot them;" and from my very boyhood, much as I liked them, I had always a wholesome dread of guns; and never carried one without a considerate recollection, at all times, of *what* I was carrying! Mark that, my juvenile friends, and do ye likewise; and remember that, as care and carelessness (and I may just observe, that this holds of all things in life) will either of them become habitual soon, it especially behoves you to begin well. A gun is a very quiet thing, so long as no one meddles with it; but, when once you handle it—*cave!* Since these,

"my grandfather's days,"

reader, I have had as much shooting as any one man need wish to have on this side the grave, and may now but too truly

exclaim, *Non sum qualis eram.* But though, ere this, I have bagged my two-and-twenty partridges, in one-and-twenty successive shots; my wild swan, at 250 yards distance; my forty-four teal and four widgeon,* and my three Brent-geese,† flying, out of six, at 143 yards, each at one shot; though I have handled the best of the locks, and shot with the best of the guns of Joe Manton and of Purdey, and have been the fortunate possessor of as good dogs as the most fastidious sportsman need wish to shoot over,—I do not think I ever really enjoyed the sport more than when, at eight years old, with a terrier at my heels, and a rusty flint-lock carbine on my shoulder, I sallied forth—his only gamekeeper—*to shoot snipes and woodcocks for my* GREAT GRANDPAPA!

My father was both good in the saddle and a capital shot, and used to shoot with old Twigg's guns; no bad name (twig, reader,) for a gunmaker.

Both my grand-dads rode to hounds like "good uns;" and my paternal one, though a lawyer, was a rare good fellow, and was *killed in hunting.* And, to say no more of my ancestors, there was one D'Acre, a bold Northumbrian, of whom it was declared, when he was gathered to his fathers, that there literally was not one single bone in his skin which had not been broken *once*, at the least; but, then, he would do mad things; such as riding for a certain fall, galloping his horse over a large sheet of ice, &c.; and, really, as my worthy preceptor, Dr. Sleath, of Repton, used to say, "if a man will act like a fool, he must expect a fool's reward." And now I think I may, without presumption, appeal to even Nimrod himself, whether I am not, to adopt his own language, "pretty well bred for fox-hunting!" And how numerous soever the defects of my book may be, no one, I think, can justly say of its author, "Depend upon it, that fellow never had a grandfather."

But there is still another relation, a worthy aunt of mine, over whom I must not, cannot pass; and the more so, as she was one who encouraged field sports, and was, in every respect,

* Vide engraving, p. 526. † Vide engraving, p. 518.

a downright excellent woman, of the good Queen Bess school, and "no mistake." I feel certain I have but to mention the name of the late Mary Lady Clerk, of Edinburgh, to insure the approving testimony of *all* who inhabit that "city of palaces." She died there, as she always hoped she might do, at the age of ninety years, calmly resigning, to Him who gave it, one of the finest spirits that ever animated the human form:—*Requiescat in pace!* To depict the varied excellencies with which this noble specimen of woman (whose personal attractions, in her younger days, were as much in her favour as was the less fragile beauty of her mind) was endowed, would, indeed, require the master hand of my Lord Brougham himself, who, by the way, could well attest the excellence of the character to whose memory I am now paying this imperfect tribute. I will, therefore, confine myself to the publication of but two extracts from original letters of hers, addressed to myself; one extract, respecting her, from "Blackwood," and one anecdote from many I could relate; and I will begin with the last. At an age when few possess much energy, and many do little else but moan and grumble, she was remarkable for her vivacity and sprightliness of humour. One day I accompanied her to call upon a lady in Edinburgh, on one of whose door-steps was sitting an old Scotchwoman:—"Pray is Mrs. —— at home?" said Lady C. to this old lass. "She's not *here*," was the reply. "Not *here!*" said her ladyship, in a good-naturedly provoked tone;—"did you think I expected to find her *sitting on your knee?*"

ANECDOTE OF THE HIGHLANDERS IN 1745.

COMMUNICATED BY MARY LADY CLERK, TO THE PUBLISHER OF "BLACKWOOD'S MAGAZINE."

Sir,—According to your request this morning, I send you some account of the particulars that attended my birth,—which I do with infinite pleasure, as it reflects great honour on the Highlanders (to whom I always feel the greatest gratitude), that at the time when their hearts were set on plunder,

the fear of hurting a sick lady and child instantly stopped their intentions.

This incident occurred November 15, 1745. My father, Mr. D'Acre, then an officer in his Majesty's militia, was a prisoner in the castle of Carlisle, at that time in the hands of Prince Charles. My mother (daughter of Sir George le Fleming, Bart., Bishop of Carlisle) was living at Rose Castle, six miles from Carlisle, where she was delivered of me. She had given orders that I should immediately be privately baptized by the Bishop's chaplain (his Lordship not being at home), by the name of Rosemary D'Acre. At that moment a company of Highlanders appeared, headed by a Captain Macdonald, who, having heard there was much plate and valuables in the castle, came to plunder it. Upon the approach of the Highlanders, an old grey-headed servant ran out, and entreated Captain Macdonald not to proceed, as any noise or alarm might occasion the death of both lady and child. The Captain inquired when the lady had been confined? "Within this hour," the servant answered. Captain Macdonald stopped. The servant added, "They are just going to christen the infant." Macdonald, taking off his cockade, said, "Let her be christened with this cockade in her cap; it will be her protection now, and after, if any of our stragglers should come this way! We will await the ceremony in silence;" which they accordingly did, and then went into the coach-yard, and were regaled with beef, cheese, ale, &c. They then went off, without the smallest disturbance.

My white cockade was carefully preserved, and shown to me from time to time, always reminding me to respect the Scotch, and the Highlanders in particular. I think I have obeyed the injunction, by spending my life in Scotland, and also by hoping at last to die there.

ROSEMARY CLERK.

P. S.—If the above anecdote can be of any interest to you or the public, it is very much at your service. I have mentioned all the names of the persons concerned, which you may retain or leave out as you think fit.

Miss Law, Prince's-street, hearing of the above anecdote, sent me a present of the Prince's picture, and that of his Lady, the Princess Stolberg.

EDINBURGH, *April* 21, 1817.

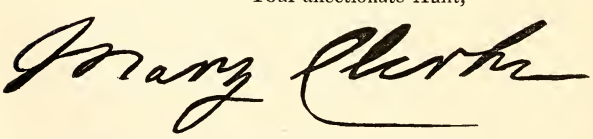
EXTRACT OF A LETTER ADDRESSED BY MARY LADY CLERK TO THE AUTHOR.

Niddrie, September 14, 1822.

We have got our visit to the King most charmingly over. Everything went on so well, and my present to him was well received; I sent it on board his vessel before he landed with Sir Walter Scott. I suppose you saw it, but I am not sure,—*Prince Charles's* travelling knife, fork, and spoon, beautifully embossed, the handles with the Scotch thistle, and the ends with the *white rose, very* fine silver. I have been amused with seeing it mentioned in every paper—but not my name mentioned; the King's answer to me was, with many thanks for the most interesting relic of the unfortunate Chevalier; and, when I was at Court, he thanked me again; and at the Peers' and Caledonian Ball he spoke and looked so kind, I was very much pleased;—all things went on so well, that *we Scotch* are quite happy.

And, with every kind wish and love to you, &c., am,

Dear Mr. Lacy,
Your affectionate Aunt,



I am going a fox-hunting on Monday, *on foot* tho'.

No man, perhaps, ever received a larger share of the world's applause, or was better deserving of it, than the author of "The Waverley Novels;" but, among all the eulogies

lavished upon him in such profusion, I much question whether any one exceeded the following, which I extract from another of Lady C.'s letters, now lying before me:—"I am a very great reader, but *not of novels;* and, except our countryman's novels, Sir Walter Scott, I cannot be troubled to read any other. They do not amuse me." Surely, "a man would be dead to fame who could be insensible to a compliment like this;" even had it reference to a work of no more importance than the one whose distinguished privilege it now is to arrest the reader's discerning eye.

John Clerk, the late Lord Advocate, was a nephew of Lady C.'s; and, were this the place to insert them, I could relate many anecdotes of him, for he was fertile in jokes. One anecdote, as coming immediately within our province, I will introduce *en passant.* It so happened that Clerk had a little hop-skip valet, named John: one night, half-a-dozen tom-cats having assembled in the yard below, were kicking up all that infernal caterwauling, spitting, and swearing, for which these animals are so provokingly notorious; till, at length, John, wearied out, repaired to his master's chamber door; and, tapping gently there, found him awake, also, from the same disturbing cause.—"Pray, Mr. Clairk, will ye let me hae the gun to shoot the cats wi'—for I canna get a blink o' rest for 'em?" "Oh! yes, John, to be sure; take the gun and shoot as many of 'em as ye can!" Away went John, with the full intention of obeying his master's orders to the letter; but, just as he was "making ready" to "present" and "fire," Mr. Clerk was heard bustling along the passage, and exclaiming aloud—"Stop! stop! stop! John!—recollect *ye hae na read the Riot Act yet!!*"

But, a truce to the levity of joke, it now behoves me, with becoming gravity, to approach the solemn subject of my *posthumous* origin!

Παντα σκια, παντα κονις, παντα γελως.

"I know not why—but, standing thus by thee,
It seems as if I had thine inmate known,
Thou tomb!"—Byron.

Know ye then, reader, that, in the early part of the last century, there resided, in Newcastle-upon-Tyne, an ancestor of mine, a married lady, named Mosley, who died and was buried, and, at her own particular request, with some favourite and extremely valuable rings on her finger: this circumstance having been buzzed abroad, at her funeral, the sexton, about

"The witching time of night,"

repaired, with lamp and spade, to

"The abode of the dead, and the place of the tomb,"

determined to exhume the —— rings, and himself to become the possessor thereof. To be brief—he unscrewed the coffin-lid, and

"Bent him o'er the dead!"

At first, he started back—appalled, for busy conscience whispered *something;* and the neighbours said that, on *that* night,

"The great bell toll'd unrung—untouch'd!"

There was, too, besides, on the visage before him, an unearthly placidity;

——— "The mild angelic air,
The rapture of—*repose*—was there.
Before Decay's effacing fingers
Had swept the lines where beauty lingers."

Still, the rubies deepened in the lurid light, and the glowing brilliants illumined the dark depths of the tomb,—and *the rings he'd have!*

Surely, reader, one might have imagined, that black darkness all around—awful silence of midnight hour—solemnity of sepulchral gloom—spontaneous tolling of bell—lurid light of lamp—glowing of brilliants—and, above all, female

"Loveliness in death,"

might have stayed the unhallowed hand of this spoliating

monster; but, ah! no!—"Truth *is* stranger than fiction!" The sordid sexton seized and wrenched the icy taper finger, but it would not part with the rings!—"the ruling passion was strong in death!" Still, *the rings he'd have!* He clenched his horrid knife, and began to saw; this *broke the trance!*—SLOWLY SHE AROSE!! and he as *quickly* fled, in dismay, never knowing *how* he reached his home; leaving the lamp to light the reanimated lady once more to her earthly dwelling. She rang the bell—was admitted, all shrouded as she was, and found her dear Mr. Mosley comfortably seated by a comfortable fire! What the actual occurrences of THAT meeting were, it is hard indeed to conceive, and no family records tell. Perhaps, the disconsolate widower-husband addressed this midnight spectre in the beautifully pathetic language of Osmyn, in Congreve's "Mourning Bride:"

> "Let me not stir, nor breathe, lest I dissolve
> That tender, lovely form of painted air,
> So like Almeria. Ha! it sinks, it falls;
> I'll catch it e'er it goes, and grasp her shade.
> 'Tis life! 'tis warm! 'tis she! 'tis she herself!
> It is Almeria, 'tis, it is my wife!"
>
> *Mourning Bride*, Act ii. Sc. 2.

Perhaps she found him—decline already marked upon his brow—"like Niobe, all tears;" and just then thinking of—HER!—(for death, sometimes, heightens affection; else, the same grave, dug but for one, had not enshrined those two too loving sisters, and Romilly had not died so soon); and, perhaps not. Perhaps—oh! naughty man! oh, fie!—ere those half-worn shoes of his were grown old—of a second Mrs. M. that was to be; for such things, alas! are in human nature; nay, worse than this—than all—it hath, ere now, been whispered that, sometimes, before even a first interment of a *first cara sposa*, there have been second ones, like certain *pairs* of new shoes in shops, "*fully equal to bespoke.*" *

* "THE PROPHETIC WIDOWER, OR ANTICIPATORY COURTSHIP." The following letter was sent by one Lord P. to a young lady who caught his "truant fancy:"—"Dear Miss ——, will you be my next? Yours, &c., P." *Literary Gazette.*

Be this as it may—for, as the Bard of Avon hath it,

> "It so falls out,
> That what we have we prize not to the worth
> Whiles we enjoy it; but being lack'd and lost,
> Why then we rack the value; then we find
> The virtue that possession would not show us
> Whiles it was ours."
>
> *Much Ado about Nothing*, Act iv. Sc. 1.

—the charms of Mrs. Mosley, in the eyes of her loving lord, with whom she afterwards lived to enjoy many years of unalloyed connubial bliss, before she went—as I doubt not she did—for GOOD, to

> "That undiscovered country, from whose bourn
> No traveller *returns*,"

appear to have lost nothing, but the rather to have been redoubled, by her terrestrial resurrection; or I had not been here to have related this most extraordinary yet well-founded narrative of her, and her dear Mr. M.; and, what is of infinitely greater consequence, the sporting world had for ever been deprived of the pleasing opportunity of welcoming the birth of "The Modern Shooter."*

Every tragic event in real life, however, has its own moral attached to it; and, from this, all married men may learn two most important lessons; first, to keep their dear deceased wives as long as they *will* keep; and, secondly, to

> "Be sure they're *off* with the old love,
> Before that they're *on* with the new."

There have been Mistress M.'s, ere now, who have made a little bit of stir in the world; but, to my fair ancestress, I believe, appertains the exclusive privilege of a return from the tomb. In case, therefore, any of my ideas shall appear somewhat premature; shrouded in gloom; buried in obscurity;

* Reader, if ever you have the good fortune to meet with any one, or all of them, be sure you put the full value, whilst you possess them, upon a good wife, a true friend, and a *good dog!*

or savouring too strongly of the midnight oil, I hope the reader will pardon my natural infirmities; and, above all, will not deem my transitions too sudden

"From *grave* to gay, from *lively* to severe."

But to return from this biographical ramble, which, however, I hope may not be disagreeable to every reader, I will observe that, from early boyhood to mature age,

"I ranged o'er the fields from morn until night,
My dog and my gun my constant delight;
I traversed the coast and the moors void of care;
What pastime on earth can with shooting compare?"

The highest intellectual gifts or acquirements are of little avail, unless the corporal faculties be also in pretty good force. I affect not to despise high talents or high intellectual cultivation; on the contrary, I am their humble yet profound admirer at a distance; I only say that, as man is a compound of mind and body, while he exerts himself to nourish the one with profitable and pleasurable stores of thought, he must not neglect* to supply the other with *its necessary pabulum of air and exercise:* and when the intellectual faculties and acquirements are of the first order, and the corporal powers high strung and vigorous besides, the "bundle of pipes," as Addison designates the human frame, becomes a *rich-toned Apollonicon!*

But,—

"What avail the largest gifts of Heaven,
When drooping health and spirits go amiss?
How tasteless, then, whatever can be given!
Health is the *vital principle* of bliss,
And *exercise of health.* In proof of this,

* Cicero, on one occasion, attributes the loss of his health entirely to a neglect of exercise:—"*Valetudinem, omissis exercitationibus, amiseram.*"—Cic. *Fam.* 9, 18.

A popular modern medical author writes thus: "It has been justly said, that, if only *some* of the many advantages resulting from exercise were to be procured by any one medicine, nothing in the world would be in more esteem, or more anxiously sought after." The same author, in the same page, also observes—"There is no exercise so natural to us, or in every respect so conducive to health, as *walking.*"

> Behold the wretch who slugs his life away,
> Soon swallow'd in disease's sad abyss;
> While he whom toil has braced, or manly play,
> As light as air each limb, each thought as clear as day."

Doubtless, any sort of exercise in the open air is, to a certain extent, beneficial; but I confess I was always among the number of those who dislike what is called "taking a walk for the sake of exercise," on a dull turnpike-road, or monotonous footpath, with no other object in view than the negative one of preserving health; just as some Cantabrigians thread those white posts on the Trumpington road, backward and forward, day by day, the same dull round, like a horse in a mill. Easton, in his treatise "On Human Longevity," says that "man is, by nature, a *field* animal"—not a *roadster*. The *mind* should be pleasingly engaged, else the body does not, by any means, derive all the advantage which exercise is capable of imparting to it. A tasked walk is well enough for an old woman. Most cordially, therefore, do I agree with the following interrogatories of our oldest sporting periodical:

"What exercise can be equal to that which has athletic rural sports for its object? What recreation can be compared to that in which the mind is pleasingly and anxiously interested concerning the success or failure of an event?"

To attempt, therefore, a formal vindication of that delightful pursuit which constitutes my present theme, would seem a work of supererogation; sanctioned, as it has been, by so many of the illustrious dead, and still countenanced, as it is, by so many living characters of no less celebrity. Passing over the heads of thousands of the former, are we not obliged to remember that *Fox*, *cunning* as he was, still contrived to shoot off the end of his thumb? And was not Chief Justice Mansfield a rare *man* in the *field?* Of living worthies, who annually

> "——— seek in fields for health unbought,"

we have such a host, that time would fail us to recount even their very names. Have we not two Captains Ross, both friends of the trigger—him of rifle, and him of Polar renown?

Peel thunders in the woods, no less than in the senate! No sportsman stands to his gun more unflinchingly than Stanley! The *level* of Russell is true and *dead* as the Bedford! *Scarlett, flushed* with the *roseate* hue of health, wends his way "all amang the *blooming* heather!" *Littledale* is *great* on the *hills!* And the Demosthenes of our age *still*

"*Brushes* with hasty steps the dews away,"

as he hies him to the mountain glen, or floors his snipe by Eamont's silvery stream; emulative, as it were, of his late brother of the woolsack, of bottom unfathomable, of trumps the king; who, to the very last, stuck to his gun, and filled his "*Bag*"—John, Earl of Eldon!

But it is not to our own sex, merely, that a love of the trigger is confined; for, among the fair, whose fatal skill with the barbed shaft is, alas!—*ah! crudeles!*—but too well known, it is not without its votaries; and who, indeed, can better deserve to enjoy the sports of the field, than those without whom, as the Frenchman has so justly observed—"les deux extrémités de la vie seraient sans secours, et le milieu sans plaisirs?" The reader, I am sure, will excuse my reminding him, also, of what an historian of *our own* has written in eulogy of our best friend:—"Woman! who exalts our joys, and soothes our sorrows; whose weakness is her greatest power; who is the protectress of our infancy, the inspirer of our youth, the companion of our manhood, and the consoler of our age."—*Hughes*, to excel *you*, would be

—"to add *another hue* unto the rainbow."

I could mention ladies for whom guns (such light pretty little toys, too) have been made expressly to order, and with which surprising execution has been done; but the following anecdote, for the veracity of which I vouch, will, I think, show the general feeling of the daughters of Britain in favour of her field diversions, better than more elaborate details:

A young lady, in Yorkshire, one day happened to fall into conversation with a not very young gentleman of that county

—a somewhat slow and patent safety—when the following laconic and pithy dialogue took place:—

Lady.—Do you hunt?

Gent.—No!

Lady.—Do you shoot?

Gent.—No!

Lady.—Do you course?

Gent.—No!

Lady.—Do you fish?

Gent.—No!

Lady (rather provoked, and somewhat energetic).—Do you *farm*, then?

Gent.—No!

Lady (out of all patience).—I WONDER YOU DON'T HANG YOURSELF!!!

The lady was right; for, as Paley observes, "engagement is everything." In my humble opinion, every lady should take the field; because, if she do not become what is called "a crack shot," she must always be

A PRETTY FAIR ONE.

Having at one time or other perused most of our popular sporting publications, it is very probable that the ideas, nay, even the very words, of preceding writers may, now and then, have been unconsciously employed; but in no instance am I aware of having directly borrowed, without proper acknowledgment of the obligation having been made. "Scraps," said Horne Tooke, "are tit-bits;" and with such I have, occasionally, enriched my volume from various sources; and, in my dissertations upon Coast-shooting especially, my obligations to Colonel Hawker's admirable work may be copiously traced.—But, whilst I thus freely avow myself greatly indebted to the lucubrations of my predecessors, I have no idea of being accused of a want of originality, much less of being deemed a drivelling book-maker, or a servile plagiarist.

"Unaccustomed as I am" to writing for the press, I feel I must crave vast indulgence at the hands of my readers, on the score of *style*, having nothing *stylish* to offer on that score. If, however, I may be sometimes found feeble, heavy, flippant, diffuse, or somewhat too provincial, I trust I may not often be found obscure.

To some, possibly, I may appear too prolix; and others may exclaim, with a friend of mine, "Give me a manual:" but, with all due deference to the tastes of others, I have a rooted aversion to manuals on sporting subjects,—unless, indeed, they be periodicals: they always remind me of a simple, a *very simple* air, without variations—or of that mongrel meal called "luncheon," which but half satisfies at the time you partake of it, and vitiates the palate for a more substantial and beneficial repast afterwards. It is quite a mistaken notion to imagine, as many do, that brevity and perspicuity are inseparable: it is one thing to dilate, another to be tediously prolix, upon a subject; and so far is the above doctrine from being invariably true, that the very contrary is frequently the case:

——— "Brevis esse laboro,
Obscurus fio,"

are the words of an eminent poet of antiquity, who was never yet accused of diffusiveness of style. To dwell upon *minutiæ* —unless they partake of the frivolity and emptiness of the veritable *nugæ canoræ*—is anything but what some designate "solemn trifling." For my own part, provided a man tell me a good many things about shooting, of which I was previously ignorant, I will not be offended at him, if, among the rest, he should inform me that it is advisable for a right-handed individual to shoot from the right shoulder, and to pull the trigger with the fore-finger of the right hand. A very dull boy has been known to make rapid progress through a gingerbread alphabet, when permitted to eat his knowledge as he acquired it; and thus I think the less heedful of my juvenile readers will be induced the sooner to *take in*, and will be the better able to *digest*, my instructions, when *seasoned* with something "very *spicy*," than if they had been dished up in the mere meagre manual style, or in the studied brevity of the rigid dogma form; whilst, for the more advanced tyro, I shall hope that my endeavours to blend the *dulce* with the *utile*, will not have been made altogether in vain.

To some, my quotations from the classics may appear too frequent; or, what is much worse, to savour of pedantry: they certainly have not been given from any such motive; but partly because I like to see a heading to a chapter, provided it be an appropriate one; and partly because I consider that, where the sentiments of the ancients tend to illustrate a subject, how homely soever it may be, they always "*carry weight*" along with them; adding strength, beauty, and freshness, whilst they impress the more forcibly on the mind of the reader what they adorn. This I should deem apology sufficient, were precedents wanting; but, fortunately for me, such already abound; and how attractive soever, in themselves, the productions of a Sir Richard Clayton, a Goodlake, a Radcliffe, a Carleton, or an Apperley, may be,— no one, I judge, will deny, that the rich banquet they have

placed before their readers is any the less inviting for the classic wild-flowers with which it is garnished.

I feel it also especially incumbent upon me to tender apology to my readers, in respect of a subject on which "all men are supposed to be fluent, and none agreeable." In a work, from whose very purport the poor author must necessarily have to speak often of himself, if not of his own performances, it certainly is no easy matter to avoid the appearance of *egotism;* and if, after all, I be deemed a sad offender, in the too frequent use of the odious pronoun, I can only crave of the reader to scan my failing with an indulgent *eye*.

It may be as well to mention that a very intelligent sporting friend of mine, for whose perusal these sheets were recently submitted, appeared to entertain the opinion that I had been almost too exclusive in my remarks upon gunmakers. My answer is, that of those with whom I have had extensive dealings, and whose abilities I know to be unquestionable, I have spoken as I think. To enumerate all the names deserving of note in the list of London and provincial gunmakers, is impossible within reasonable limits. Taken as a body, however, there can be no doubt that the former are the first artists of their kind in the world.

I have now an agreeable duty to perform—that of returning my most cordial and grateful thanks to the Nobility, Ladies, and Gentlemen, who have done me the honour to encourage my undertaking. Long may ye live—my much respected patrons—to love your Queen, to adorn your country, and to enjoy British field sports!

In apology for this book not having appeared earlier, I can only beg to assure all my friends of a fact known to many of them, that I have had difficulties to encounter of a very disheartening nature, some of which I could not have foreseen.

In regard to the embellishments, any commendation of Mr. Landells, formerly a pupil of the celebrated Bewick, will be superfluous, as his abilities are too well known to

stand in need of any eulogy—and much less of mine; and, I believe, in my frontispiece, I am fortunate in the possession of one of the happiest efforts of Mr. Prior's high talents.

Amid the conflicting opinions of sportsmen, for me to hope that my ideas will invariably be considered correct, would be presumption in its height. Experience, however, is a good tutor, and I trust I shall not often be found to have misguided my readers. Success does not always attend the most sedulous or sincere endeavours to deserve it—or it were mine; nor, if I have frequently erred, is there any cause for wonder, since the most astute fellow going has sometimes

"MISSED HIS TIP."

(A TAIL-PIECE.)

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EMBELLISHMENTS.

STEEL PLATE, ENGRAVED BY T. A. PRIOR.

RODNEY, BOB, and JERRY, three Pointers, the property of the Author. From the original Painting by SCHWANFELDER, in the possession of James Dearden, Esq., of Rochdale . . . Frontispiece

ENGRAVINGS ON WOOD.

FROM THE ORIGINAL SKETCHES OF THE AUTHOR. ENGRAVED BY E. LANDELLS.

ORNAMENTAL TITLE; to precede the printed Title-page.
FLIGHT-SHOOTING ON THE COAST; or keeping it up to a late hour, regardless of *domus et placens uxor*, to face page 496
BRENT-GOOSE SHOOTING; or, "Remembered in my line," to face page 518
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THE

MODERN SHOOTER.

IRON TARGETS.

"Ferrum nobile."

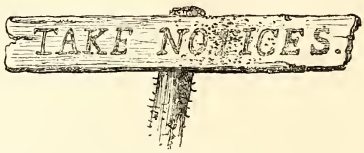
"Iron, that metal better far than gold, that best of all the gifts which a bounteous earth gives to mankind."

The Rev. Dr. Robinson of Armagh.

How beautifully just this remark!—for what other substitute could we find for manufacturing that best of all things —"better far than gold"—*a large gun-barrel?* and to say nothing of ploughshares, steam-engines, gridirons, and tailors' shears—what equal to iron for *a target?*

It is proverbial, when speaking of a bad shot, to say that "he cannot hit a barn-door." The fact is, young shooters, and sometimes those who are said to carry on their shoulders "older and abler heads," are but too prone to select improper objects for targets; such as barn, stable, and even

double (one for each barrel) coach-house doors; guide and gate posts; *wooden* mile-*stones*;—



of various sorts, descriptions, and kinds,—"cum multis *ale-housorum signis*, quæ nunc," &c. How much better, neater, and more satisfactory, in every point of *view*, would it be for the shooter to have a target of *his own*, in some sheltered or secluded part of his homestead, or premises remote from rick-yards, against which, on returning from the field, or upon any similar occasion, he might discharge his gun,—making, perhaps, every shot an experiment of some utility; instead of wantonly peppering and disfiguring objects appropriate and serviceable in themselves; or, it may be, "filling tuneful bills with blood;"—killing, or worse, oh, fie!—wounding—his mother's or sisters' pet blackbirds or thrushes, which warble so sweetly in the cherry-trees, and hop with such delectable confidence on the smooth-shaven lawn, pecking the crumbs their fair hands have strewed; or, with even still less consideration, shooting his own pigeons by way of increasing his stock, and balking a rich, gouty, uncle of his favourite pie!—An acquaintance of mine, with whom I was wont to shoot, in "days lang syne," but whose manor was never known to be overstocked with game, generally concluded the day with this latter sort of fun. He was fond of seeing the sport, if such it could be called, but at the same time thought much of young pigeons under a crust; and, therefore, required me to stand at a respectful distance from the dovecot, and await his *ipse dixit*. The duty he prescribed to himself was to throw

stones, at intervals, against the door; and, as the pigeons flew out of the holes, to "give the word of command," as follows:—"A Hen! *no go!* That—that—*that's* a cock! Fire!"—But, with all his saving energy, and all my own discernment, I fear I could not always say that I shot cocks only—and "*no mistake!*" But to return to our subject: although a fixed target be recommendable for the purpose I have named, yet this is by no means its sole or its greatest advantage; for it is convenient for trying guns, as well for the purpose of regulating properly the charge of each, as for forming an accurate judgment in respect of the relative merit of their shooting. It is here, and here alone, that the different effects of different kinds of gunpowder, shot, and wadding—of loose shot, and of cartridges, can be ascertained with any degree of accuracy: in a word, no experiment can be correctly determined without a target. Wooden targets (despite of all that chalk, mud, or putty *can* do, in marking or in filling up the old shot-holes, to say nothing of their soon becoming unwieldily heavy to move, the expense of paper, united to the constant bother and loss of time in nailing it up, and the trouble of looking for, and poring over, the perforations—after all so often miscounted, especially in a bad light)— serve only for a few shots, and are, at best, but perishable;—whilst iron will outlast the shooter himself, and still be nearly as good as ever;—iron, therefore, can alone be recommended. I here beg to present my readers with a few specimens of iron targets.

Fig. 1—Is obviously the simplest and cheapest form of iron target, being merely an iron plate, procurable from any blacksmith. Punch two holes at opposite corners, and suspend the target, by means of strong wire, or, what is better, a piece of chain—string or cord being liable to be cut through by the shot, when down tumbles the target. The whitewash, in

all cases, must be laid on smooth and even with the brush, *just before the gun is fired.*

Fig. 1.

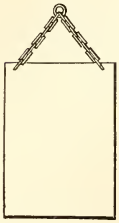


Fig. 2.

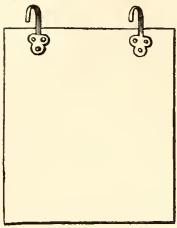
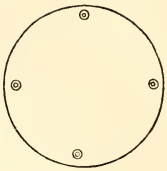


Fig. 3.



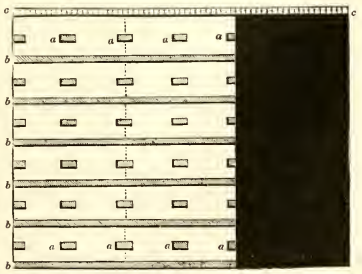
The best sized target for gun trials, at forty yards distance *only*, is one exactly two feet square; as you are then able to ascertain whether the gun throws the proper number of pellets into that space. With No. 6 shot, a sixteen gauge gun should average ninety; a fourteen gauge, 100; and a twelve gauge, 110 pellets. I mean with guns of the ordinary sporting size.

Fig. 2—Is a plate of iron of much more substance, and of larger dimensions than the foregoing; and it is, therefore, far preferable for gun trials beyond forty yards.

Sink two iron bars, or two posts faced with sheet-iron, firmly and perpendicularly into the ground; then, having fixed a bar of wood or iron transversely, suspend the target by means of hooks riveted to it.

Fig. 3—Is a circular target of cast-iron, with four holes drilled through it, to admit a rope, or chain, as the means of suspending it. It is portable, and answers very well for rifle practice; it is one inch and a quarter thick, and eighteen inches in diameter. The ball would perforate malleable iron.

Fig. 4—Is the front of a target, sixteen feet in length, by twelve in height; the back of it—supported by three brick pillars—is nine-inch brickwork, coped on the top, with brick on edge. Six three-inch deals, each sixteen feet long, are worked into the wall, about two feet above each other; and, between these, rows of wood-bricks are also built into the wall. The whole is faced with thin sheet-iron, cut in lengths of six feet each; the iron being fastened close to the wall, by means of nails (short, thick, broad-headed ones) driven into the edges of the planks and the wood-bricks. This target I invented, and caused to be erected, exclusively for stanchion-gun experiments: being in an exposed situation, a cruel north-easter, one winter's night, levelled it with the dust. I had no idea, however, of being thus floored, and of having my experiments left incomplete by this sweeping progress of "rude Boreas," and, therefore, had it rebuilt.

Fig. 4.

a, a, a, a, wood-bricks, let into nine-inch wall; *b, b, b, b, b, b,* sixteen feet long, three-inch planks, built into a wall of nine-inch brickwork; *c, c,* top course of wall, built of brick on edge.

Of course, none of the above, excepting Fig. 3, is adapted for ball shooting. Where, therefore, the shooter is desirous of

rifle or other ball practice, his best target would, perhaps, be a cast-iron door, or slab of cast-iron, three or four feet square, let into a wall, or a frame of brickwork, so that the centre of the target may be about shoulder height. But the cast-iron should be thick—say not less than one inch and a quarter at the least—for targets of less substance, I know from experience, are apt to fly like glass. I have shivered more than one such to atoms with balling cartridges, and this, too, notwithstanding the *unfounded, confounded assurance of the founder*, that they would "stand anything!"

Should the shooter be desirous of anything beyond these, I would recommend him to inspect, with Mr. Purdey's permission, his magnificent target, at Norland's Shooting-ground, Notting Hill. This target, fronted with slabs of cast-iron, two inches thick, and powerfully supported behind by a vast mass of brickwork, is so lofty, and so wide, as to defy almost all possibility of danger. In proof of its powers of resistance, I may mention, that it sustained the shock of a balling cartridge containing one pound of 3 A shot, with three ounces of the strongest coarse powder behind it, fired from my large stanchion-gun at but 100 yards' distance, leaving scarcely any indent; and yet the same charge, balling afterwards, at 250 yards, went completely through my target (Fig. 4), iron, bricks, mortar, and all (though its passage was certainly facilitated by grazing a wood brick), and knocked the stone-coping off a wall five feet behind the target:—of a truth, reader, it is no Jonathan I'm telling thee!

For shoulder guns, however large, a target three feet square may answer very well—though, even for these, a larger target is preferable—because, if the aim be not well taken, or the gun do not shoot true, you still see more, if not the full effect, of the shot;—but, for a stanchion-gun, such is the compass of its spread, the larger the target the better. I did

not find the large one described above at all too large. The most skilful marksman will sometimes miss his aim, just as a string will, occasionally, jar in the hand of the best master;—to say nothing of the requisite elevation at long distances, or of the deflection of the shot occasioned by a side wind, when the body of it will, of course, deviate more or less from the bull's-eye in the centre of the target; so that if the latter be too contracted in its dimensions, a great portion of the charge goes over it, or beyond its sides. Then, instead of having the pleasing picture of a full round orb of shot-marks, thickly and regularly disposed as the stars in the firmament, all that remains for you to form a judgment upon, is a small segment of the whole, from which nothing definite but disappointment can be deduced;—a "by-go"—a worse than waste of both time and ammunition.

The ground in front of this target should be level for 100 yards at the least; and, if for rifle practice, or stanchion-gun trials, on an extensive scale, for 200 or 300 yards; and at every ten or twenty yards, from ninety to 150 or 200 small posts, painted white and numbered at the top, in figures of black, should be driven in (in a lineal direction with the centre of the target, and, therefore, with each other), quite level with the surface of the ground. By this means, the respective distances having been once accurately measured, you have no after trouble; and the plan supersedes the necessity of what is technically called "the scratch," ever ugly and liable to mislead you, especially if there be many of them at different distances.

As to the position of a target like No. 4, it is best placed, when opportunity offers, at the foot of a hill, or backed by rocks, or in any such sheltered situation, to prevent mischief from all passing shots, slugs, or balling-cartridges; otherwise, some careful person should always be stationed in

a commanding situation to "*look out*"—especially where roads and footpaths intervene—and give notice, by signal, to the person about to shoot, that he may be certain of a clear course before he fires, than which nothing tends more to give confidence to the shooter.

To obviate such accidents with a small target (or with a large one, if not protected by natural Alpine shelter, such as I have just described—or a sufficiently high solid wall), place a high wall of loose bricks, several courses thick, stones, sods, or even a stick-heap,* behind it; and if you lay a brick pavement in front of it, with a slight descent for drainage, you may—having swept the pavement with a besom, previously to shooting—recover a good deal of the flattened lead, which, when remoulded, forms shot and bullets of the *hardest* description—ticklers, I ween, for swans and geese.

Where the soil is a greasy clay, or a firm sand, you may try guns very well against the cliffs on the coast, as every shot mark is visible, and you can either keep moving from one perpendicular part to another, or remain stationary, by battering out the effect of each successive discharge with the back of a spade, and thus preparing a fresh smooth surface for the next. I have tried this scores of times.

In no situation can rifle-practice be more successfully, safely, and, therefore, more pleasantly conducted, than against

"Some tall cliff that lifts its awful form."

Coast-mud,† snow, and water, when unrippled and smooth as

* I have been credibly informed that no less a sum than £400 was offered and refused for a stick-heap thus placed in the suburbs of London; and which, for several years, had withstood the "pitiless pelting" of the cockney host.

† Whenever opportunity allows, the young gunner should be careful to trace "the stripe" of the shot on the mud or wet sand, as by this means he may learn much as to the effect of different charges and sizes of shot; judge distances, the influence of the wind on the shot, correction of aim, &c.

a mirror, are all excellent in their way to try the effect of a charge. When trials are made on the water with a large gun in a canoe, you can form the best idea of the gun's performance by standing a short distance *behind the shooter;* and, if accustomed to see guns tried in this way, you may judge pretty accurately as to the shooting powers of each. The majority of shooters may not have all the above advantages of trial, but may have an iron target of some sort; and for choice, give me a large, thick, cast-iron target, in preference to all other plans for trying guns of every description.

TRYING BARRELS AT IRON TARGETS.

Iron, when newly whitewashed (for in very hot weather the solution applied soon becomes caked, or "baked," flakes off, and hardly shows the impression of the lead) with lime, or tolerably thick whitewash, which last is far preferable, exhibits at once the pattern of the shot, in the most conspicuous manner, from the contrast of the bright lead-coloured dots with the white ground; and any one much accustomed to witness trials of this sort, will be able to tell, at a glance, whether the barrel can shoot or not. Forty yards for a partridge-popper, or common fowling-piece, and ninety yards for a stanchion-gun, are generally considered the outside point blank range for each. In all cases, the best shooting barrel is that which, at such distances respectively, when fully loaded with equal measure (or thereabouts) of powder and shot, throws that shot most truly, and, at the same time, most thickly to the centre; the remainder of the charge being distributed regularly and equi-distantly around, yet with sufficient close-

ness to ensure taking the body of a bird with, at the least, two pellets. This, of course, does not apply to the outsides of the circle, where straggling shots will always, more or less, appear. I have fired hundreds, I may say thousands, of rounds at targets, in my time, and have seen many a one fired by others, but I never knew a gun throw the shot in *this* form, at *such* distances respectively, that did not also shoot *strong* enough.

By "fully loaded," I mean with as heavy an equal measure charge as an experienced target-shooter will bear with ease to his shoulder. It does not follow that the shooter should be compelled to use this charge in common, nor is it, by any means, always to be recommended, as I shall afterwards show. He can gradually reduce it to his liking; and, when he has once ascertained both that charge which best suits *the gun*, and that which best suits *himself*, let him note *both* down, and regulate his powder-flasks accordingly; and so with every gun he may have in his possession. If his shoulder will not bear that charge which the unerring target shows to be the best shooting one, let him regulate his charges as near to that as his comfort will allow.

I am aware that the charge is frequently found to range incorrectly, or, in other words, is thrown more or less above, below, or at the side of the object aimed at; but these defects, where the guns of first-rate makers are used, generally arise from some fault in the shooter; if, however, the body of the charge be irregularly thrown, the defect is, generally, in the *boring*, and then the blame attaches to a different person.

For my own part, I would not give the smallest coin of the realm for any gun-barrel which did not throw the shot in a proper manner. A man who carries a good gun, knows who ought to bear *all* the blame when a fair shot is missed, but not otherwise. Some knowing ones, nevertheless, pretend

to tell us that all guns of equal weight and length, and of similar calibre, shoot so nearly alike, that the difference is not worth naming. I have a slight idea that these King Solomons labour under an egregious error.

If a person stand about twenty yards from an iron target, in an oblique direction (and in stanchion-gun trials he ought not to stand much nearer, for it is astonishing the distance to which mould-shot will rebound, and, when thus flattened, its sharp edges might very easily endanger an eye), he will readily ascertain how the shot comes up: of course the pellets should not follow one another with a feeble patter, like green peas pelted against a wall; nor yet should they resemble hailstones on a sky-light, exactly—though that is better—but they should come *slap up, all at once!*

If, upon closer inspection, that same person find the lead-marks large in proportion to the size of the shot used, and that, in consequence, well flattened, he may rest satisfied as to the killing properties of the gun.

But if *very* nice points as to strength of shooting have to be determined, say such as the dubious superiority of two kinds of wadding, for instance—of double felt and of cork sewed up in flannel—you must have recourse to sheets of brown paper nailed to a wooden frame, and hung just clear of a wall, or iron target; the first and (if necessary) the last sheets being replaced by fresh ones after every discharge.

If you do not weigh each charge of powder and shot, detached measures, or chargers, of solid brass should be used with the precaution of gently tapping them on the table, to settle the powder or shot. The rounds should be fired either all from a rest, or all from the shoulder, and by the same person, selecting one who can both shoot and stand fire. Simple and easy as may appear the firing well and true at a target, yet I can assure my juvenile readers, that,

as with many other manual operations, it is easier to be a spectator than a good performer.

The quires of brown paper should be from the same mill, perfectly dry, and of equal weight and size. The best in quality and the heaviest brown paper I know of, is that called "Kentish bag-cap:"—common as brown paper is, there is vast difference in its quality—a difference by no means unworthy the notice of the experimental shooter. For a temporary trial, when no better target presents itself, you may form one of any size, by pasting sheets of paper together, of which that called "elephant brown" is the largest and the best for this purpose.

I am aware that, ere now, "oscillating targets" have been constructed on "agate centres"—affording, I presume, the nicest and most delicately fine results; and, doubtless, when men of high scientific attainments, possessing, too, all "means and appliances to boot," bend their attention to such objects, the speculations of a mere practical amateur gunner, like myself, are soon thrown into the background. I recommend my gun trials only as the best which have occurred to me, living in a secluded part of the country, and having merely my own personal resources to depend on for the acquisition of practical knowledge in these matters.—*Si quid novisti rectius*, &c.

How often have target trials of the latter description, enabled me to regulate, much to their satisfaction, the charges of guns belonging to sporting friends, some of whom had previously shot for many a long year, though with a clipper of a gun, under the worst auspices, in consequence of having employed either an inefficient or a disproportionate charge, and having, perhaps, for too long a period, been carrying a heavy gun, which was always found unequal to compete with far lighter ones belonging to brother shots, simply because the one was as

ill as the others were well regulated, in the proportion of their charge. Nay, such is the advantage of a correct system of charging, that an ignorance of it may sometimes constitute, in reality, all the difference betwixt "the crack" and the indifferent shot: at all events, I remember more than one instance where the results were twice as successful after such alteration in the loading of the gun. The gun itself, too, has a good deal to do in forming the crack shot; for, charge them as you will, many guns cannot be made to shoot beyond mediocrity.

At the same time, a good and well charged gun may become a bad one in bad hands. Many persons have given long prices for guns, or have made a bad exchange, from having observed the long shots which have been made with them, when in the hands of some brother of the trigger, and have afterwards felt much chagrined, when using a similar charge —the stock, too, well suited to the shoulder—to see their own birds, when stricken at like distances, giving a momentary twinge, instead of dying in the air, and coming down in style, as before, when the gun was in different hands. The gun, then, comes in for that share of reproach which somebody else deserves:—"I sold you the horse, sir," said the farmer, who rode him so brilliantly to hounds, "but I *cannot* sell you the rider!" and, depend upon it, the nerve, the hand, the finger, and the eye, are quite as requisite to form the crack shot as the crack rider, or accomplished horseman; and this, probably, may be the reason why the same individual so often, though not always, excels in both exercises.

Many years ago, a brother sportsman, a quick and pretty good shot, and an everlasting, yet not too rapid, walker, contrived to bag, as most such shooters will, a good deal of game in the course of a season. I frequently accompanied him in shooting, but never observed any birds killed well, and

but few stopped at all at long distances; notwithstanding which, he was ever and anon high in praise of his gun. I had, in consequence, long entertained a desire to test it against cold iron, and at length prevailed upon him to entrust this precious gem to my care for the express purpose. I was very particular, as, indeed, he desired me to be, in measuring accurately his usual field charge of both powder and shot, and in employing wadding similar to that which he was in the habit of using, especially as he was positive that his own was the best possible loading the gun could have; and as such he required me to send him a detail of the trials, which I did as follows:—

"Average of nine shots, at forty yards, with your usual field-charge.

"*Closeness.*—Nearly two to one in favour of a wild goose escaping being hit at all!

"*Strength.*—Great doubts whether a pound of butter (if hit), would be any the worse!

"*General Observations.*—Day remarkably still and fine. The very worst gun I ever tried, excepting none!

"Yours, Lacon-ically,

"LACY."

By altering the charge to something pretty nearly the very opposite to what it was, I certainly very much improved the shooting of this gun; but, though letters of gold were inlaid on its rib, and though it was Midas TOUCHED beside, still it was, at best, but a very sorry shooting piece: and, moreover, was very narrow bored, and very short in the barrel: I therefore recommended my friend to part with this superior pistol, with which he had been pottering on for fifteen long years, and to get another, I need not say—a better gun! With some reluctance he adopted my advice, of which he afterwards was candid enough to acknowledge the full benefit. The old golden favourite ultimately became the property of

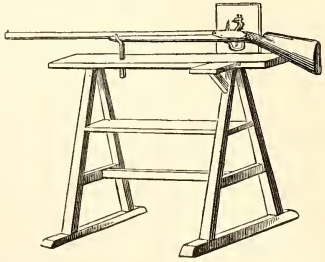
an honest farmer, who, when his corn began to turn, applied it to the only purpose for which it could ever have been intended.

This, to be sure, was an extreme case,—of many very bad ones, unquestionably the worst that ever came under my notice; and although, now-a-days, guns are more tried by gunmakers than formerly, yet still it is much to be doubted whether one-third of those who shoot, even in these luminous times, have their field charges by any means regulated to the best advantage. I am acquainted with some who are as bad still as any of the old school ever were;—too small a quantity of powder, with too heavy a charge of shot, and, in not a few instances, too scanty a supply of both, being the prevailing errors. One reason for obstinate perseverance in these, is the dread of recoil; and, no doubt, some men will stand behind a charge with perfect ease, comfort, and indifference, which will materially discompose, if not swell the shoulder or cheek of others; but this is, in great measure, owing to the mode of holding the gun to the shoulder, and to the position of the cheek in the act of firing;—one holding it with careless ease, and as loosely as a spy-glass, and the other grasping it tightly.

I recollect, on one occasion, after a pigeon-match, two of the gentlemen who had been engaged, requested to try a double barrel I had then been shooting with; it was accordingly loaded precisely as before, and but seven shots had been fired out of it since it had been cleaned: the *finale* was—it swelled the cheek of one, and gave the shoulder of the other such a a thump, that he declared he "would not regularly shoot with that charge if I would give him the gun for so doing." Now, I have fired this self-same gun scores of times since, with precisely "that charge," and have ever found it go off with perfect ease to my shoulder! Both these gentlemen, to say the least, were certainly my equals, and one of them was

decidedly my superior, in point of strength; and the stock was adapted to the eye and shoulder of all the three: but the fact is, strength has but little to do with the case; it is the felicitous, firmly, pliant mode of holding the gun in the hollow of the shoulder, on the one hand, and the resolute determination not to flinch from it, on the other, which keeps "all right" on the right shoulder and the right cheek.

Before concluding this chapter, it may be as well to name that the most expeditious and correct mode of counting the perforations of the shot, where paper is used, or the shot-marks upon whitewashed iron, is to divide them into three or four compartments, by drawing lines straight or undulating—as the spread may be—across the sheet; in the former instance in ink or in pencil, and, in the latter, by drawing the end of a piece of stick through the whitening. Put down the sum of each compartment in its own enclosure, and add the whole together for the amount. It is extremely tedious to reckon the shot-marks from a stanchion-gun, without having recourse to this method; indeed, it would require the patience of Job, or even of a schoolmaster.



ON THE BEST CHARGE FOR GUNS.

I HAVE incidentally said a good deal on this subject in the foregoing chapter.

Many years ago, during the Augustine age of pigeon-shooting, a specimen of a single-barreled gun, varying in weight from eight and a half to ten pounds; in length, from two feet ten to three feet two; and in bore, from a ten to a seven gauge—in fact, *a little duck gun*—became the order of the day, among the crack pigeon-shooters; and, having plenty of metal at the breech-end, and, being stout throughout, was admirably calculated for resisting the explosion of a large charge, and for shooting well; and, in short, was, is, and ever will be (to those who can carry and wield it with ease), the most killing of all guns for long distances. At that time there was no inconsiderable rivalry among the heads of the trade in the manufacture of these guns, which, indisputably tended to improve the art of gun-making in general, more than any other branch of the business. Every mode of ignition; every description of lock (Purdey made Mr. Shoubridge a gun, expressly for pigeon-shooting, on a new percussion principle, without any striker at all on the lock); every size of bore; all lengths of barrel; all sizes of shot; and every description of wadding, were tried, in turn, in order to produce the best and strongest shooting gun, the pigeon being a bird so difficult to score; partly on account of its shot-repelling hard feathers, and the close thick down at their roots; and partly because the rules of pigeon-shooting require that, in order to be scored, the bird shall be picked up within bounds, seldom, if ever, exceeding one hundred yards from the trap, and sometimes even much more limited than that. Nor

was it, at that time, anything very uncommon to hear of one hundred guineas, or more, having been offered, and refused, for one of these guns, which had won "a grand match." But in no one respect were all parties more strenuous in their efforts, or more nicely particular, than in their endeavours to hit upon the most correct regulation of charge, or best mode of loading guns; and about this time it appears to have been generally agreed, among the cracks, that *the best charge* was *an equal measure of powder and shot*, equivalent, in quantity, to the utmost extent of comfortable humeral endurance. I do not mean to assert that this regulation was new, because it had been a received opinion, among coast shooters, half a century before; but merely that it was now, for the first time, stamped with the approval, and recognised as sound doctrine among our first-rate pigeon shots and sportsmen.

I recollect, many years ago, making one of a private party with the late Mr. Shoubridge, when the latter was practising for his great match with Mr. Osbaldeston, and this was *his* regulation of charge: viz., four drams of powder, and two ounces of (No. 4) shot. I also noticed that he used, as wadding on the powder, the best velvet cork, cut thick, and stained or painted black, to deceive the prying eye of the too curious.

From "The Red-House Enclosure," this proportion of charge was transferred to the field, and, ultimately, became so common, that "the gentlemen," were supposed to be nearly as *high chargers* as the gunmakers themselves.

I have already given my opinion as to loading. But as, under certain circumstances, I should make variations in my charge, I shall here explain myself more fully. In wild-fowl, grouse, or rabbit shooting, or wherever game require a hard blow, and are wild and scarce, I should always use the

heaviest charge which the target had previously informed me my gun would carry with the best effect, and which will, generally, be found to be in the proportion of equal measure of powder and shot, or, perhaps, a little less than this of the latter; because I should, in such case, calculate on getting but few shots, and those, probably, at long distances only. But were I going to shoot at Holkham, I should then certainly reduce my charge of both powder and shot; because I know that guns, when fired often on the equal-measure principle I otherwise advocate, do not (bore them as you may) keep to their shooting, in consequence of becoming so foul from the large charges of powder repeatedly used. If you have your gun washed out in the field, or have a change of barrels, or of guns at hand—and it is fashionable now to make guns in pairs—it then becomes quite another affair: but merely to wipe out or dry-wipe the barrels in the course of the day, is not only a miserable substitute for a thorough cleaning, but is certain to occasion misfires, by dislodging the scales, and driving them into the chamber, thus cutting off all communication with the pivot, unless one person invert the gun whilst another wipe it out, taking care that the rod do not reach within two or three inches of the breech. There are also two other plans worth naming for renovating a gun when fouled by much firing. One is, pour the third of a full charge of powder into each barrel, immediately after having discharged both; then insert a tight-fitting, punched wadding, and ram it hard; next introduce the wire scratch-brush at the end of the cleaning rod, or you may have a loose head and brush to fit on the ramrod itself, and work it well up and down the barrel; then, turning the muzzles down, strike them gently upon any piece of soft wood, or the branch of a tree, to shake out the roughest and loosest of the scales; and, lastly, fire both barrels to clear the remainder. To obviate the necessity of taking out a

cleaning rod, some of the Lancashire sportsmen put a small roll of soft iron wire, such as is used for carding cotton in the factories, into the pocket, tie it round the worm of the ram-rod, and use it as a scratch-brush, and a good substitute it is, though, in my opinion, not equal to either of the above-named plans. The pigeon-shooter should have a small piece of deal, on purpose to strike the muzzle of his gun upon, after every shot, in order to shake out the scales. This he will find an invaluable wrinkle. I frequently adopt a similar plan in the field, after having fired *both* barrels—for neither should be loaded at the time—bending down a hazel-branch for the purpose, or "tapping" the muzzles gently against the spar of a gate, or the root of a "hollow beech tree."

Of the two extremes, that of overloading with shot is more absurd than its opposite; yet whatever the advocates for the ounce, and *but* for the ounce of shot, may say, it is too small a quantity. To a certain extent, Obstinatus is correct; it *is* the *shot* which kills. We grant, the less the superincumbent weight of shot upon the powder, the greater the velocity, and, therefore, the force; but the fewer the pellets, the less the chance of hitting. Hence the beauty of Eley's cartridges, which, whilst they admit of a reduction upon the proper loose shot charge, still shoot closer and stronger than it does.

In filling the top, or charger, of your powder-flask, if you press the end of your fore-finger into the mouth of the charger, or pipe, and then simply turn the flask topsy-turvy, in the usual way, you may rob yourself of, perhaps, a quarter of a dram of powder at the least; but by pressing the same just, and only just, sufficiently close to prevent the escape of the powder, and by giving the flask, when inverted, a smart shake against your thigh, the measure will thus be filled as full as it can hold. "*Knowledge is* powder!" This may not be a matter of so much moment in common shooting; but in

wager shooting it will tell, and that is the reason why I tell it to the juvenile sportsman. Not that I recommend him to gamble, but some day, perhaps, he may be induced to make one at a pigeon match for a silver powder flask, goblet, or tankard; and, if so, I wish he may win it.

Never mind what the philosopher says about the injurious effects of compression upon gunpowder; ram both the powder and the shot pretty hard, it is the safest and the best plan.

Before you place wadding on the shot, give the butt a stroke or two on the ground, if not dirty; otherwise, on your foot, to settle the shot, and thus to make it lie even. This will cause it to be thrown more efficiently in every way.

Always load with the cocks down, and whilst the barrel is warm from the previous discharge; and prime, that is, cap the nipples, or insert the primers, the last thing. And, whilst loading, be careful to hold your gun in a *safe* position, which, it is presumed, the annexed cut will explain better than words.

ON KEEPING FIRE ARMS AND GUNPOWDER IN A HOUSE.

THERE is nothing which tends more towards securing and preserving that lucid order, so highly and deservedly extolled by the sages of antiquity, as a strict practical attention to the common old saying, "a place for everything, and everything *in* its place." Extent of space, or room, is undoubtedly advantageous, but if arrangement be wanting, this very enlargement renders slovenliness only the more glaringly apparent. It was the boast of one of my preceptors, that, "though he had 500 volumes in his library, he could go and put his finger upon any one of them in the dark." Now, although I would by no means recommend my juvenile friends to be too finical, or painfully exact in anything, yet I would most strenuously submit to them the propriety of securing their guns and gunpowder in the best and safest manner of which their situation and circumstances will admit. When the shooter returns home, his *first* care should be to deposit his gun loaded (which it never ought to be on such occasions) or unloaded in a *safe* place, as well to prevent it being injured, as to obviate accidents. His powder flask, also, must not be forgotten. The *best* place to keep guns in, is a glass case, precisely similar (though, of course, *under lock and key*) to that which may be seen in any respectable gunmaker's shop; but as the glazed sashes, or doors, are sometimes made to slide past each other, and sometimes to open, I may just state that the latter is the better plan of the two. A very small case of this sort will hold half a dozen guns, and it may be two or three fishing rods; whilst the drawers below, of different sizes, will suffice for all "the traps." The case may be made of mahogany, wainscot, or deal painted in imitation

of either, as any one of them will answer, provided the wood be well seasoned; and thus you have a piece of furniture not only neat and useful but ornamental to the gun-rooms.

But if the sportsman *build* a room professedly for the purpose, he would, then, probably, fix his glass cases for his guns in a recess in the wall. Having thus, in the best manner, and in the smallest compass, disposed of his guns, and "the traps" thereunto belonging, the shooter has his tool-rack, or chest; his vice and anvil; a tap for water, perhaps; may be, his turning-lathes; and, certainly, his hones and bit of Turkey-stone; for he has learned the nice art of setting his own razors. So that when, by special favour, you are admitted into this little *sanctum*, or snuggery, "it looks like a general magazine of all necessary things;" everything is ready to hand, and "it is a great pleasure to you," to see your friend keeping all his traps "in such order," and "to find his stock of all necessaries so great;" especially, if you have *un*fortunately forgotten to bring any of your own along with you! You are also gratified to notice that whilst your friend nauseates all dandyism, he is yet correspondently neat in his shooting "toggery;" so that both in the house and in the field, though anything but *Missey*, he is still like the poet's dear Alicia,

"*Simplex munditiis*—to the last degree."

When no better accommodation presents itself, the shooter may keep his gun under lock and key, in a common cupboard, or even in the travelling gun-case. There are gun-*racks* of iron or brass, in which the gun is secured by a clasp and padlock. These can be fixed against a dry wall, in any convenient part of the house, over the chimney-piece or elsewhere; or a wooden rack may be put up by a carpenter, somewhat in the primitive style of our friend Crusoe. In short, by *some* means or other, the gun ought, at any rate, to be elevated above the

reach of children. It is a common error to place it too near the fire, which is apt to warp the stock. A gun should be kept perfectly dry, but no more. When put by clean, the barrels should be oiled both inside and out, with a *thin* coating of the best flask oil, for no advantage is gained by clogging any part of a gun with superfluous oil. Indeed, the result is quite the contrary; for, externally, it thus becomes clammy and unpleasant to handle; and if you load it, when thickly coated within, it will spoil the powder, although the gun be otherwise perfectly clean. The cocks should be down, but the barrels are better without stoppers in the muzzles, and when not regularly shot with, the gun should be examined once a fortnight or so, the old coatings of oil, inside and out, being then wiped off, and fresh ones applied with linen folded round the end of the gun-rod, so as to fit the barrel tightly. If the gun be not in a glass case, or otherwise perfectly protected from dust, it should be kept in a cloth or leathern cover. As regards the safe preservation of gunpowder, the powder flasks in use should be kept under lock and key, and be replenished, from time to time, as required, from the magazine. If you have one of "WALKER'S IMPROVED PATENT GUNPOWDER-BARRELS" (of which see more under *Art.* "Gunpowder"), and make a point of never opening it by candlelight, you may keep a large quantity of gunpowder safely in any part of a house; but, universally, the nearer the roof the better, because, in case of explosion, the worst that may happen will, probably, be no more than the *skying* a few tiles or slates.

The regular gunner, who must often have "a heavy stock" of gunpowder "on hand," should be particularly cautious how he keeps it. I keep mine in sealed canisters, in an inch deal box, with the lid screwed down, and suspended near the roof in a spare and distant garret.

FORGING GUN-BARRELS.

Since the general introduction of a portion of steel, in the iron manufactured purposely for the best gun-barrels, has taken place, a new and much improved plan of forging them has been adopted. The old "hooping" system, which obtained when stubs were "all the go," is now, in a great measure, abolished, and the scraps of mild steel (chiefly old coach-springs and pieces of edged tools), blended with new iron, after having been cut into pieces of equal dimensions and properly cleansed, are fused in an air furnace, and are welded into what is called "a bloom of iron;" which being then removed from the furnace after various processes of beating, heating, and rolling—the oftener the better provided the fibres be kept running longitudinally and not crosswise, or tortuously —are at length reduced to rods of the desired size. These are then either twisted at once round the mandrel, in the usual way—or the rods are first screwed or twisted round, like string, which is found to give the iron an additional strength by what is called "*locking the grain*"—after which it is turned round a mandrel and welded in the usual way.

The *laudatores temporis acti* may boast as they please of the superiority of the old barrels; but the fact is, our modern best barrels are incomparably superior to all foreign productions, new or old. We have now light barrels with large bores, which stand proof well, and are never known to burst, although the sudden explosion under the percussion system is, of course, much more trying to a gun than the slow and gradual ignition under the old scintillating plan.

BORING GUN-BARRELS.

The mechanical process of gun-barrel boring, is one which is far better seen than described.

Without professing to give the reasons for the fact (which, however, does not tend to make it less a fact, though many plausible reasons might be adduced, such as the different grades of quality and temper in the metal of the same, or of different barrels, and which no mechanism can alter), all experience seems to prove that no *one* principle whatever has hitherto been discovered, which will make all barrels shoot either nearly alike, or, what is of far more consequence, *as well as they can possibly be made to shoot.*

I do not mean to assert, that one plan of boring, or one expert borer, will not be found generally superior to another; or that any sound barrel, of pretty good iron, when in good hands, may not, by perseverance in trials and judicious alterations, be made to shoot, at the least, well, but I deny the infallibility of any one system, and, therefore, of all. When the rough stocking is finished, the gunmaker, or his *tryer*, goes to the target to "shoot the gun;" and, if he find one barrel of a double, shoot very well, and the other as ill (and this is frequently the case), if he be wise, he "lets well enough alone," and keeps altering the other barrel until it "comes to." I have had double guns before now—and so have many others who never knew it—whose barrels shot equally well, but which were bored on principles totally different from each other. You must not, therefore, be fettered by system, but must vary your style of boring, according to the barrel you have to deal with. Barrels bored on similar principles throw their shot in all sorts of patterns; and the grand art is to be able

to direct the borer in *what part* of the barrel alteration must be made to remedy this or that particular defect. And when I assure my readers that I have known a *single turn* of the bit, in the finish of barrel-boring (when a shaving, no deeper than the thickness of bank post paper, was cut in *a small part only* of the barrel), make an average difference of twenty pellets for the better, in a sheet of brown paper, at forty yards, and with an increase of strength besides, do not let him imagine that fine boring is not a delicate art, or that alterations, in themselves apparently the most trifling, are not sometimes productive of results the most important, "as the reduced gentleman remarked, when he exchanged apparel with the scarecrow." And hence regulating the barrels to shoot well, where the gunmaker does his duty, is often a work of considerable time and labour.

The three ways of boring most in use, though not all of them new, are—

First—A perfect cylinder throughout.

Secondly—The same, with the exception of a very trifling degree of gradual relief, for a few inches forward only: and,

Thirdly—Opened behind, in a greater or less degree, cylindrical a good way up, and then gradually, though very delicately, relieved forward; or, in other words, a cylinder between two fine cones. And here I will give the best mode of ascertaining how any gun-barrel is bored. First, wash the barrel clean, and take the breech out; then take a lead gauge (say one inch and a quarter long, for a small gun), cast with triangular bearings, and fitting the muzzle rather tight at first; and, after it has been greased, force this through the barrel fixed in a vice, by means of both hands applied to the gun rod. The lead bruises up, or gives way, as it is driven through the nipping part of the cylinder, and on pushing it gradually through, a *second* time, and looking to the light, you

may perceive the different degrees of contraction and relief; but as these are, for the most part, so trifling as to be almost imperceptible, it is only by close observation that you will be enabled to decide, with accuracy, how the barrel is bored. But it is, at all times, a matter of much more consequence to you, to ascertain that the barrel is *perfectly sound*, has a clean inside, free from specks, and shoots well—than how it is bored.

The first two plans of boring, abovenamed, have the advantage over the third plan of both recoiling and leading less, with repeated firing, but do not, in general, shoot so strong as it does. At the same time all of them have often enough succeeded and failed in turn, and will do so again. Many will tell you, and, perhaps, tell you truly, that, generally speaking, guns shoot best "from the bit;" that is to say, without any subsequent polish internally. Rough bored barrels may shoot the best at first, but try them a year or so, and it will be found that they do not keep to their shooting, like those which, after having been rough bored, undergo the process of what is called *draw-boring*, which is effected as follows:—a cylinder of lead, about four or five inches long, is first cast in the barrel itself, on an iron rod, the surface of which is then thinly coated with oil and fine emery powder, and as the barrels are bored *spherically*, and the rod drawn *longitudinally*, the wrinkles, or "rings," left by the bit, are thus removed, and the whole surface polished off smooth and even; a plan highly recommendable for best barrels, however large or small they may be.

WEIGHT OF GUNS, AND LENGTH AND BORE OF BARRELS.

———— "Quid ferre recusent
Quid valeant humeri ——."

HOR.

IF the additional weight of the key of a stable door, in the pocket of a jockey, be said to have told upon a horse in a short race, must not a quarter of a pound, or even an ounce extra, have its effect upon a man in a long day's walk? And yet this seldom enters into the calculation of the shooter.

It is one thing to carry weight, another, to carry it *with ease:* just as it is one thing to whip up a gun to your shoulder with delectable facility in a gunmaker's shop, another, to be the bearer thereof over twenty miles of country, beautifully diversified with heath-clad mountain and quivering bog.

In my opinion, if a man overweight himself *ever so little*, it spoils his shooting. He cannot bring up his gun with sufficient quickness to bear on the object, and, therefore, loses distance, and by tiring the left arm, the prime agent in taking aim, his shooting becomes very uncertain.

Every shooter, therefore, should ascertain the weight he can best manage, and leave it to the skill of the gunmaker to make a gun to suit him.

The length of the barrel ought to be proportionate to its weight and bore, in order to make a gun look well—that is, neither too clumsy nor too fine drawn—and handle well. Long barrels, therefore, are only properly applicable to heavy guns with wide bores. Admitting, that length increases the shooting powers of a barrel (a position which very many deny), guns with long barrels can be advantageously used

by those only to whom considerable weight is unobjectionable. So that the regulation as to length is not so much a matter of choice as of necessity.

The arms of Achilles would have been of no use to a little hero; because, however good his spirit, he would have lacked the requisite strength to have borne, much less to have wielded, them with effect.

Double guns of the middle size, *viz.*, from two feet six inches to two feet eight inches long in barrel, and weighing altogether from seven pounds to seven pounds ten ounces, may be carried, managed, and loaded with the greatest convenience, ease, and safety—more so, perhaps, than those of any other dimensions; and, take the kingdom through, these are the favourite sizes for a double, and will ever remain so. Barrels somewhat longer than these may or may not kill a little farther; but they are more in the way in covert, and are more fatiguing to carry, especially in windy weather, when also they are worse to aim with.

Double guns for game-shooting should have bores of the middle size, never smaller than a sixteen, nor larger than a thirteen. Small bores shoot comparatively well at first, but much worse afterwards, as they foul so soon. Invariably the locks should be small, the wood and furniture light, and the main strength or weight of metal be placed at the breech ends.

For pigeon, flight, or duck-shooting, heavier guns of larger calibre, and, therefore, of greater length of barrel, may be preferable: but, on these occasions, it must be remembered that the shooter is, for the most part, comparatively stationary, and has no chance, therefore, of being fatigued by carrying, much less "slaving away," with his gun.

As for a punt or boat-gun, *that* is altogether another affair; for it admits of almost any size of bore or weight

of metal that you please, as both the gun and its recoil are (or may be) supported by artificial means; and here I should prefer considerable length of barrel, as, indeed, suitable proportions demand. But it is as much a matter of expediency, if not of necessity, to have extra length in these guns, as it is to confine the barrels of shoulder guns to a medium length; for granting that the "minor cannons," as some assert, shoot as well or better than longer barrels, you could not use the former with propriety in a canoe, on account of the danger, from an accidental discharge, of ripping up her deck.

For growing, and particularly for tall growing youths, heavy guns are by no means recommendable; and, indeed, have not seldom proved extremely injurious. Hence, small bores and lighter doubles than those above-named might be desirable, during the early seasons of their sporting career. In fact, for a young beginner, I should prefer a single-barrel, two feet seven inches or eight inches long, with a fourteen or fifteen gauge; and thus the untired tyro will get accustomed to the carrying, loading, and firing an effective gun of similar length and bore to the doubles he will afterwards have to use, and which his increasing strength will enable him to carry with equal ease. But an adult will frequently find that, by *gradually* inuring himself to carry heavier guns, he may increase the weight he can bear, and that, too, considerably, not only with impunity, but without any perceptible difference or inconvenience to himself. It has often been argued that the soldiers of antiquity—clad as they were in ponderous armour—must have been superior in strength to the men of "these degenerate days;" but though, to the latter, such armour might be cumbrous at first, by use, it would become supportable. At the same time, whilst the sportsman may thus, by degrees, habituate himself to the carriage of heavier

guns, still he will discover that there is a pitch beyond which he cannot go, without, as I have already stated, injuring his shooting.

PROVING GUN-BARRELS.

The gunmakers' company was incorporated by royal charter of King Charles I., on the 14th March, 1637. The preamble sets forth "that whereas we have been informed of the humble petition of our well-beloved subjects, the gunmakers, in and about the city of London, that they, for many years, having lawfully practised the manufacturing of all sorts of arquebusses, planteenbusses, blunderbusses, musquetoons, galleon muskets, daggs, and pistols, and every other sort of hand-guns which they are fully able to furnish, and that the gunmakers had, of late years, obtained more *exquisite skill in that mystery*,* and that certain blacksmiths and others, inexpert in the art of gun-making, had taken upon them to make, try, and prove guns, in their unskilful way, whereby much harm and damage had been done, and serious injuries sustained, by persons using guns, &c., from the bursting thereof, in consequence of the barrels not being sufficiently proved; and, therefore, we, of our special grace, certain knowledge, and mere motion, have willed, ordained, constituted, and granted, and by these presents, for us and our heirs and successors, do will, ordain, constitute and grant, that Henry Rowland, our now gunmaker, Thomas Addis, John Watson, John Nercote, Wm. Graves, and many others, freemen of the

* Two hundred years ago! Shades of our fathers defend us! could they but have seen a highly-finished Joe, or a Purdey, what *would* they have said?

city of London, together with others, be, and shall be, by virtue of these presents, one body corporate and politic, in deed and in name, and shall have continuance *for ever*, by the name of master, wardens, and society of the mystery of gunmakers, of the city of London."

This chartered company is in existence at the present day, the members of which are selected from the most intelligent and respectable persons, well known for their strict integrity and ability. They have the power, granted by several acts of parliament, to prove gun-barrels, in a way therein described; they have also the power of search, view, gauge, and proof trial of all manner of hand guns, great and small, and pistols, in London, or the suburbs, within ten miles thereof, either made or imported for sale. The said charter ordains that guns shall not be sold unproved, under certain penalties, and shall be forfeited, if exposed to sale without being first proved. It authorizes the seizure of all such arms; it subjects all makers of guns to the company; it authorizes the breaking and defacing of arms that are unserviceable, and prohibits private persons from exercising the art of gunmaking in the before-named limits, unless they have served a seven years' apprenticeship, and have brought a proof piece of work, and presented it to the company, and have been approved and allowed as expert workmen.

This would be an excellent law, if acted upon in the present day; it would put down those unprincipled *tinkers*, who, without the slightest knowledge of a gun, have the effrontery to write up "gunmaker" over their door, and, by collecting the refuse materials of the trade, get up a showy-looking gun, often with a respectable maker's name engraved upon it, and, by offering it at a low price, tempt the unsuspecting purchaser, and, if the gun bursts, say *I* did not make it. It is really

shocking to hear of the numerous accidents which occur in consequence of this nefarious traffic.

The manner of proving barrels is as follows: they are loaded with good and sufficient gunpowder, of the strength used by the Hon. Board of Ordinance, and a bullet of lead, of the size of the calibre, is rammed with paper before and after the bullet. The gunpowder used is, in quantity, to the size of the calibre, as stated in a scale which is regulated according to an act of parliament made for that purpose.

Musket-barrels, when loaded, are laid in a row of sixty at a time, on a cast-iron frame, notched so as to fit the barrel; they are placed in a line parallel to each other, about four inches apart; a train of gunpowder is laid all along the touch-holes, and brought outside a very thick iron door, which is shut, and the train is fired by a match. The report is long and loud. Musket-barrels are also proved a second time. When they are percussioned, they are fixed in a cast-iron block, and the copper cap is struck by a spring that is raised a sufficient height, and then let fall. The charge used for this proof is the regular charge used for the service. Fowling-piece barrels are laid in rows, on a soft bank of sand, that they may not be bruised or injured by the recoil, and fired by a train in the same manner. The bullets are discharged into a thick bank of sand, which is occasionally sifted to collect the old lead. After barrels are fired, they are very strictly examined by competent persons, sworn to do justice, and if they have the smallest bulge, or flaw, they are rejected, and are not stamped with the proof marks. The inspection is exceedingly strict in this respect, and the proof so efficient, that a barrel has never been known to burst by fair loading afterwards. So great is the reputation of the London proof, that numbers of barrels are sent from all parts of the country, and

even from abroad, to be proved; and certainly the utmost credit is due to this company, for the strict and honourable manner in which they conduct their business; it gives protection to vast numbers who use fire-arms, including the army as well as the sportsman.

BREECHINGS.

Although the plans of breechings are numerous, yet the heads of the trade all adopt Joseph Manton's patent one—no inconsiderable proof of its superiority. Cupping deep, which has a tendency to weaken the screw, seems to be the prevailing error of most other breechings; and as Manton's is of the strongest and safest form, and is, at the least, equal to any other in all other respects, there requires no prophet to foretel that it must outlive all opposition.

Every person who has tried as many target-experiments with guns as I have done, must know, as well as I, that the *form* of the breech is of very little consequence as regards *strength* of shooting. Nothing can beat the common, or, at all events, the chamber plug, in this respect. But patent breechings are advantageous, because they give quicker ignition, a centre fire, strengthen the breech-end, and, admitting of being case-hardened, are not subject to bruises and rust.

When the barrel is plugged, it is not only highly essential that the plug should *joint perfectly close*, but the threads should *fit exactly from top to bottom*. This is best ascertained by *smoking* the breech before it is turned in, and then turning it out again, when the *exact bearings* may be seen. If room be allowed for the flame to insinuate itself between

the threads, corrosion takes place, and renders the breechings extremely difficult to take out, even after they have been in the barrels but a very short time.

Coarse threads are best for the plugs of large barrels, and fine threads for those of smaller ones; nor should there be too many of either.

VENT-HOLE.

Small as this aperture is, it has been the occasion of many warm debates among sportsmen, who, with equal energy, have contended for and against its adoption. Where doctors differ so widely, there can be no harm in offering an old opinion of my own, which is, that every detonator ought to have a vent-hole. The copper tubes, or primers, affording no great obstruction to the passage of air into the chamber, and, at the moment of ignition, blowing themselves clean, and out of the touch-hole, give vent enough. The want of a vent-hole in a copper cap-gun occasions a great accumulation of soot in the chamber, and therefore causes the gun to recoil more; and as, by admitting air, the powder burns more freely, I should "guess" the force of the discharge is anything but impaired thereby: besides, where there is a vent-hole, the wadding is rammed home with greater ease when the cock is down, and the cleaning of the barrel is also somewhat facilitated thereby. I have always used the *fixed platina vent-holes*, which were invented by Purdey; and, like many other of his inventions, were silently copied and adopted by not a few of his detonating brethren.

THE PEG, NIPPLE, OR PIVOT,

Ought to be of a conical form, from the base upwards, both inside and out. I have used Purdey's pegs ever since the first appearance of the copper cap, and they have answered remarkably well. They are turned like a screw, with shallow threads, which, for double guns, I prefer to their being smooth, except for double rifles, where there is, or ought to be, no recoil, and, therefore, no jar, from the explosion of the first barrel, to shake the cap on the second, either quite off, or to loosen its hold. The top of the peg, externally, should be rather concave, and the hole rather large; say, when new, wide enough at the top to admit a small pin: these orifices burn larger by use, and, when much enlarged, the pegs themselves not being quite safe, should be thrown away, and be replaced by new ones. Many sportsmen prefer the smooth, or polished peg; but if the other have no additional advantage, it has this, that if, at any time, you be unable to procure caps of the exact size required, those which go on rather too easily, or which may be too short, have a much better chance of keeping on, especially if the former be first slightly compressed between the teeth. These pegs are formed with an oblong, or a square base (the former by much the neater of the two), removable, at pleasure, by means of the peg or nipple wrench; and upon these bases the letters R and L should be respectively stamped, to distinguish that which belongs to the right from that which belongs to the left barrel, as well as to remind the young shooter of the initials of the author of a new work on shooting; and the threads of these screws should be made so true that, when screwed home, the

bases of the pegs, or nipples, should stand exactly fair with the muzzles of the barrels, and not all awry.

As to the position of the peg on the barrel, I have seen it fixed in all forms, from the horizontal to the perpendicular, but prefer it as Purdey has always had it, with a slight obliquity backwards, or sloping towards the striker. A small implement, called a peg-clearer, keeps them from rust, with the occasional use of a little oil.

If a shot-corn, from any cause, get tightly wedged in the peg, or nipple, twist a piece of wire round it, and put it in the fire, and, *the moment the lead begins to melt*, take the nipple out, and give it a shake or two.

COPPER CAP.

Although the copper cap be a diminutive, yet there have been as many claimants to the honour of the invention, as, of old, there were contending cities for the honour of having given birth to Homer: still, it does not appear that the world has hitherto conceded to any *one* the right of appropriating that honour to himself exclusively; so that what Colonel Hawker calls "the wished-for discovery of the copper cap inventor," remains still a desideratum! and the *semper honos*, &c., is as yet applicable only to some "great unknown."

The Colonel himself, Mr. Egg, in Piccadilly, and Mr. Purdey, all appear to have strong claims to the merit of the discovery, and, probably enough, might each invent it unknown to the other; for each has invented better things, or, at all events, such as have displayed more ingenuity. The Colonel's pretensions are given in his book, and appear quite decisive of

his having been *an* inventor at the least, if not the original inventor, of this mode of ignition. Mr. Egg indisputably laid the earliest claim to the invention, and assured me, many years ago, that "the *first* copper cap"—for there is always a something extraordinary attending the birth of new inventions —"was made out of an old penny-piece!" That Purdey was "the great original" of this tidy little contrivance—this bit of "*thimble*-rig" in the art of gunnery—I by no means intend to assert; but that he himself, ever since the copper cap appeared, has been of that opinion, I am most thoroughly persuaded. Having, for some years previous to that event, been the leading man in Forsyth's establishment, Purdey was early and well schooled in the detonating system; no man, therefore, more likely than he who had become so conversant with the defects of Forsyth's lock—to strike out a new plan on the percussion principle. Be this as it may, the following is entirely in substance, and nearly *verbatim et literatim*, what he related to me some eighteen or twenty years ago. "I was," said Purdey, "sitting, one evening, with a friend, named Prior, who had just returned from a very wet day's shooting; the detonating patches were then in vogue, and Prior complained that 'he found them too much exposed to be waterproof,' and suggested the idea of 'enclosing them in some substance impervious to wet.'" "Yes," replied I, inverting an empty tumbler, "a metallic cap in this form, with a perforated peg to communicate with the charge." "The day following," continued Purdey, "at the request of Prior, I set to work to realize this new idea, and, from the *tag* of an old umbrella, produced a brass cap, which was handed about for some time, and, a year or two afterwards, Mr. Egg brought out the copper cap!"

These surely give strong indications, on the part of Purdey, of a Prior-ity of claim! But, if Purdey were not the inventor

of the copper cap, most certainly he was the first to bring it to the highest pitch of perfection. He always insisted on thick copper, well knowing that such caps, when once made to fit the peg, retain their shape, and are less liable to fly, and to stop up the orifice of the pivot when fired: they are manufactured from the best wrought copper, and with splits, so that, on explosion, instead of being shivered into splinters, they merely expand equably, giving full vent to the gass all around, the whole of the copper remaining under the concavity of the striker's head; whilst those caps which are made solid, and of thin copper (like the French ones), are apt to fly. A deep concave head is, certainly, a *sine quâ non* to every striker destined to fall on a copper cap; but, in addition to this, we must have the copper thick, so as not to break in firing.

In proof of the superior excellence of Purdey's copper caps, I know many who use them who do not shoot with his guns.

As a mode of ignition, the copper cap has long superseded flint and steel; is now in almost universal use; and, excepting for stanchion guns (which are the rather not adapted for it than it for them), is, take it for all in all, the very best mode yet known.

The accidents, and some of them very serious ones, which have occurred from the use of copper caps, are literally innumerable, despite which the plan loses no ground. The truth is, these accidents have not been, and are not incidental to the invention itself, but to the slovenly and inefficient mode of applying it, and to the shooter's own want of care.

Every country whitesmith, now-a-days, considers himself a dab at detonating. Nay, I know of a wheelwright who undertakes what he calls to "cushion" guns! So that, what with English cushioning and French caps, no wonder the doctors should have so much employment!

I do not know that I can conclude this subject more suitably, or beneficially, than with the following CARD, which Mr. Purdey has addressed to Sportsmen, and which I trust THE MODERN SHOOTER may be the means of conveying to the hospitable abode of many a worthy and gallant brother of the trigger.

"Copper Caps of the first quality, manufactured by J. PURDEY, 314½, Oxford Street, London.

"The superior advantages of these caps are—1st. They are perfectly waterproof. 2nd. Never missing fire. 3rd. And, on the explosion of the gun, they never break to pieces, or fly about.

"The extreme toughness of the copper, owing to the peculiar way in which they are made, prevents the possibility of the most powerful gun TO BREAK THEM; these caps are each made and primed separately; by which means they are accurately primed, and produce that uniformity of force, so very desirable for the accurate shooting of *pistols and rifles*. Caps are usually made and primed, a great number at a time, by machinery, *they therefore cannot be perfect;* some have too much priming, which causes them to explode too violently, force up the cock, and the broken caps to fly about; others miss from not having sufficient flash to fire the charge.

"N.B. In damp weather, lay the caps near the fire for a few minutes, it will cause them to fire much quicker.

"TESTS FOR COPPER CAPS.—Gentlemen are particularly recommended to try copper caps before using, in order to detect those that are primed with fulminating mercury, which the common caps sometimes are; these explode so extremely violently, as to force back the cocks, split the shields, and force the broken copper in all directions, to the *great danger of the eyes;* they are also not to be depended on, as the mercury being in contact with the copper, which it decomposes, in time they become quite useless, and will not explode.

"These caps may be detected by throwing a few into a clear fire; if they make a loud report and fly about, or if, after firing them on a gun, the cap is broken by the explosion, and pieces of broken copper are found about the nipple, reject them as highly dangerous and unfit for use.

"*N. B. Copper Caps of all sizes, and at Prices according to their Quality.*"

CAP BOXES, OR CAP CHARGERS.

Few, it may be, have tried a greater variety of these than I have done, and one of them I tried before the invention had appeared in public.

If the shooter use Purdey's caps, or caps as large as his, he must have a charger selected, if not made on purpose for them; otherwise, he will find those of the shops not always *deep* enough to admit them. Whatever be the respective sizes of your guns, it is desirable that all of them should take caps of an exactly similar size, for then one size of cap, and of cap charger, serves for all, and "no mistake," nor possibility of it.

The long, narrow cap chargers, with spiral springs, either partially exposed in the centre (when they are apt to choke up with dirt, &c.) or wholly encased in brass, however well made they may be, are extremely liable to get out of order, and have other capital defects; in short, for my own use, I would not have one a gift. The round ones are not only the best but the only real good ones, and those made of German silver, by Alport, of Birmingham, are the neatest and best of all. They are beautifully turned, are exceedingly light and handy, and will contain upwards of thirty caps.

Caps carried loose in the pocket are very liable to admit dirt, shot-corns, &c., and, unless kept in a waterproof box, are liable, also, to receive injury from wet or damp. Before the *round* charger appeared, I was an advocate for carrying a few caps loose in my waistcoat pocket, myself, or my attendant, carrying the small waterproof metallic box in reserve; but now I consider this a very *loose* mode of procedure, so much so, indeed, as to render it positively an act of slovenliness to

shoot without a cap charger; which, be it remembered, answers the purpose of the very best metallic box, as well as its own; so that if you expect brilliant sport, you or your attendant can take out a duplicate charger fully supplied with its complement of caps.

Another advantage of these chargers is, that you not only may know how many shots you have had during the day, but, by deducting the number of head of game bagged, and making allowance, it may be, for two discharges of powder by way of airing your barrels at starting, and for misfires, if any, you can also tell at once how many *misses* you have been guilty of. And it is presumed you will thus *sometimes* discover, that you have used more caps, and have expended more ammunition, to no good purpose than you would like to own to your brethren of the trigger; or, perhaps, but for this unerring mode of registering your day's performance, than you would be able to persuade yourself had actually been the case. But if the caps be carried loose in the pocket, you never can tell, to a certainty, how many shots you have had; because, on more than one occasion, you may (a very common case) have pulled out two or more caps at once; may have a hole in your pocket, &c.

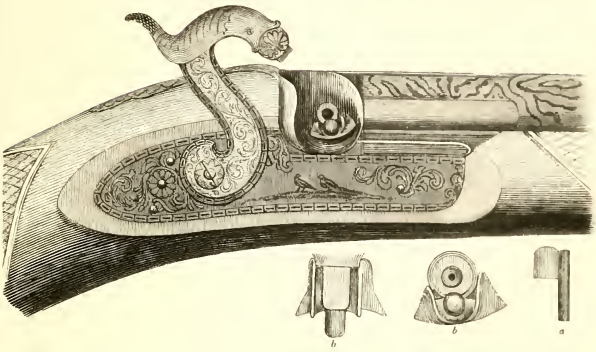
WESTLEY RICHARDS'S STEEL PRIMER.

It is always best to go to the fountain head:—so, some years ago, I had a ten pound ten gauge single duck-gun (and a good one it proved) made to my own order, by Mr. Richards, with this his mode of ignition, for the express purpose of giving it—as I afterwards did—a full and fair trial; for, in-

disputably, the invention is an ingenious one. It has not, however, the simplicity, lightness, and neatness of appearance of the copper-cap; nor can you get fresh supplies of the primers, except from the inventor himself; and if the touch-hole break, it is costly to repair; and, perhaps, can be repaired only by the maker. These primers occupy much more room in the pocket than caps, and are apt to get locked or entangled together, so that, in taking out one, you are at all times liable to draw out more, especially with a glove on; and they bid defiance to the use of every kind of primer-charger. I have heard it alleged against them, that they will, occasionally, stick fast in the touch-hole, but do not recollect to have experienced much, if any, inconvenience of that sort from them myself. They certainly are not altogether waterproof; but on salt water, or in wet weather, are, at the least, fully equal, if not superior, to the copper-cap, over which they have two advantages; namely, the *impossibility* of splintered particles annoying the face and eyes, or the hole of the pivot being stopped up by copper or foil.

But, after all, when the copper-cap of "the right sort" is fitted to the gun in a workmanlike style, as a general mode of ignition it has, in my opinion, a considerable balance in its favour over the steel primer.

EDGE'S ECCENTRIC CAPPED-TUBE PRIMER.



a, the primer; *b*, *b*, the steel pivot and steel bed, dovetailed into the side of the breech.

Long before this invention was fully matured, Mr. Edge himself, a very intelligent gunmaker, and a superior workman, in Manchester, laid the particulars of it before me, requesting my opinion upon it. I told him it appeared to me, that brazing presented formidable obstacles to the perfection of the plan. In the first place, the difficulty of getting the primers brazed well; and, in the next, that the caps for the cone must be made solid; because, if made with splits, the brazing would render them so pliant, that they would either double up with the slightest pressure, or otherwise the splits would open; and that the French cap had, long ago, taught us the important lesson, that a solid cap is never certain of fitting the cone well. Suffice it to say, however, these apparent difficulties have been completely surmounted; and the eccen-

tric capped-tube primer, with splits in the cap, forms now the simplest, and, in my opinion, *by far the best tube plan* that has hitherto appeared; for, not only is it free from all the superfluous lumber of springs, covers, &c., but, instead of the hammer falling on the lock, the percussion takes place on the breech itself; and, by reducing the size of the tube, and loading nearly one half of it with *incombustible* matter, the noise which, in the old tube, was intolerable to the ear, is now, at least so Edge tells me, no greater than that of a copper cap. But as to its virtues, Mr. Edge shall now *edge* in a few words for himself, agreeably to his own specification.

" The advantages of J. W. Edge's eccentric capped-tube primers over copper caps, are—

" 1. The total abolition of nipples to communicate the fire, by a long narrow train, to the charge, thereby doing away with the chances of the same being stopped up, broken, or blown out;—of the holes being burned larger, and, in consequence of so much more flame being thus emitted, the hammers thrown back to half-cock, when the bells, or concave heads, are often broken, and sometimes the hammers themselves (owing to the neck of the tumbler being wrenched off) blown completely away.

" 2. The abolition of nipples supersedes the necessity of nipple-keys, probes, and duplicate nipples.

" 3. The obtaining a more direct and certain fire in all weathers, by land or sea.

" 4. The being able to use a larger-grained powder.

" 5. The decided superiority in shooting.

" 6. The diminished recoil.

" 7. The safety in firing, as they cannot fly.

" 8. The impossibility of the hammer, or any fire, being blown back into the shooter's face or eyes.

"9. The impossibility of their getting entangled with each other in the pocket.

" 10. The platina touch-hole being impervious to fire.

" 11. The protection from wet; in addition to which, the ends of the tubes may be dipped in a waterproof composition.

" 12. The simplicity and durability of the whole.

" No plan, subject to a valid objection, can be pronounced *perfect;* and, with all its admitted excellencies, as a mode of ignition, the copper cap is still obnoxious to many defects; some of which are incidental to the contrivance, and *cannot possibly be remedied.* Thus, the priming in the cap lies so far from the body of the powder in the barrel, that unless a few grains of powder, after every loading, be visible at the orifice of the nipple, the gun very often either hangs or misses fire. The nipple sometimes breaks off below the base, or square, leaving a part of the screw within the breech; and then of what use are keys, or duplicate nipples? Neither, with all the skill of the very best workmen, can any nipple be warranted sound before trial, as there may still exist in the steel, flaws which it is impossible, at all times, to guard against, or at any time to detect. Moreover, where the nipple-key and duplicate nipples—one or both—would have been found singularly useful in the field, it has not seldom been discovered, that they have been very unfortunately left at home. Many sportsmen have recourse to the dangerous practice of putting the hammer on the cap; neither does the total removal of the latter afford certain security that a loaded gun will not go off; as accidental friction, or the hammer being suffered to fall too heavily on the top of the nipple, where a small portion of the percussion-powder is wont to remain, has frequently caused ignition to take place, attended with fatal results. *All* the above defects are *entirely* got rid

of by the use of *the eccentric capped-tube primer;* for no gentleman would ever think of letting down the hammer on the tube, whose instantaneous removal renders danger impossible, as no percussion-powder can ever remain where the hammer strikes."

THE SIGHT.

The sight is a small piece of silver or gold, of a globular form, with a short neck, which screws into, and, indeed, through the barrel of a single gun, and into the elevated rib of a double, nearly at the muzzles' ends: and, in my opinion, a gun looks *unsightly* without a sight.

Silver sights radiate more than gold ones, in bright weather, otherwise they are a better contrast to game. Course lumping sights are bad in any gun, and in a rifle execrable. Many profess to despise a sight as utterly useless; but, in my opinion, sights of a size proportioned to the elevation of the gun (the higher the elevation the higher should be the sight) are advantageous to any shooter, and to beginners indispensable. If sights really be such useless appendages to a barrel, whence comes it to pass that they should be in such general use, and especially among the dove destructives, who hate anything superfluous about a gun?

A steel sight is the best for a stanchion-gun; but as the barrel is, or ought to be, long, as well as thick, at the breech, and is better for having an elevated groove on the false breech, the sight should be a proportionately high one.

Rifle sights are fixed on a thin slip of steel, dovetailed into

the barrel, and, after having been properly regulated, are rusted in with an acid, which keeps them from moving.

One very celebrated rifle shot always has rifles low sighted; and, in shooting, uses nearly all the sight, but aims low.

THE RAMROD.

THE solid corkscrew-formed worm may be said to be in universal use for ramrods, and is, as Colonel Hawker observes, "the best to take hold of all kinds of wadding;" though, for a stanchion-gun, a stout double or single common worm of steel answers very well. The brass cap which covers it has a slit at the top, to admit the edge of a strong knife, or turn-screw, in case of the shooter being unable to twirl it off with the finger and thumb. It is also removed, in a moment, by cramping it gently in a vice, or, at a pinch, by one person gently closing a door, or gate, within an inch of the end of it, whilst another screws it off; or, if alone, the shooter may manage this by himself. The threads of the screws should, at all times, be kept perfectly clean, and lightly greased, and then there will never be any difficulty in screwing off the cap.

The concave bottom of the ramrod—which should be well fitted to within one-tenth of an inch of the calibre of the gun, in order to prevent the wadding from tilting, or turning edgewise, when rammed down—has, or ought to have, the number of the gun marked upon it, by way of distinguishing it and the duplicate from the rest of your ramrods, as well as from those of all other shooters who may happen to be under the same roof with you; it ought, also, to have a narrow groove

cut across it, to allow the air to escape when ramming down the wadding, and which groove should be kept clean.

Purple wood, king wood, snake wood, hiccory, and, sometimes, English ash, are all employed in the manufacture of ramrods; of these, the first is, deservedly, in most general use, the second and third are the handsomest and the heaviest, and the last two are the lightest, and are, therefore, generally used by gunners on the coast; because, if the rod fall overboard, it floats, which is not the case with those made of the heavier woods.

As I have generally, and of late years invariably, had the ends of my ramrods made broader, so have I had the ramrod itself made thicker than usual; and, of course, the pipes on the barrel must be proportionately wide to receive the rod.

A light detached gun-rod, however, of cane or whalebone, with a concave bottom of brass, and with a turned solid top, makes the best of all ramrods, especially for cartridges; but this must be carried by an attendant, in a strap, slung across his shoulder; though some sportsmen carry it themselves.

There should always be a stopper on the rib, under the muzzle of the gun, to prevent the ramrod flying forward on the recoil; and the top pipe should be about five and a half, or six inches from the muzzle, so that the rod may have a pleasant spring, and thus come out easily, in cold weather especially.

STOCKS.

Stocks are made of walnut, maple, and ash; but the former is the best for service, being the least disposed to warp or crack.

London is the grand mart for prime gun-stocks. A great

number come from France. "Figured" stocks, or such as are finely veined, or mottled, are usually cut from the root of the tree; but are seldom, if ever, the strongest. Indeed, neither the root nor the branches will produce stocks so good as those which are cut from the butt, or bole, of the tree.

A good judge can tell the quality of a stock in the rough, from the sound alone, by tapping it with the knuckles; all sonorous bodies are brittle, and many of the best looking stocks are of this description.

In choosing a piece of wood for a stock, the grand point is, to have the vein running parallel with the bend of the stock, in the handle, and in those parts where the lock holes are to be; in fact, in those parts the most cut away, and, therefore, the weakest; and as it is clear that the wood ought, naturally, to have *grown* in this form, it follows that such stocks must be selected from a number. If, however, the grain of the stock run right, in the right parts, the butt cannot be too highly figured; for no one would prefer a plain table to one of root of elm, oak, or yew. A stock which deservedly may be called a perfect beauty of its kind, is very rarely to be seen. A capricious sportsman, who is ever changing his guns, should look to figure in the stocks, because many are captivated by it; and, after a stock has been a good deal used, if not abused, it may be "vamped up" by the gunmaker, and thus be made to look nearly as good as new—in fact, ten pounds better—for, perhaps, fifteen shillings cost; the barrels, at the same time, being fresh browned. There is no washing a blackamore white, nor restoring juvenility to a superanuated beauty; but no novice in the mysteries of the useful art of vamping, could credit its renovating effects upon a gun, which, to all appearance, and in reality too, has seen its best days! It may have had its tours to the Highlands, yet, thanks to vamping, is

"Still bright in immortal youth."

The best colour, generally speaking, for a stock, in the rough, is dark brown: Joe Manton used to choose them "brown and sound."

For some years past, Purdey has stained many of his stocks black, and a black stock, with German silver furniture, is very handsome. The plainest stocks are generally the best for service, and are, for the most part, the best seasoned, having been laid on the shelf for years, like some poor spinsters, for lack of external beauty.

Some—many—object to stocks with a pistol grip, or handle; it certainly is no ornament to a gun, and, some imagine, causes you to undershoot your game. Some prefer it for a single, who will not hear of it for a double gun. For my own part, I consider a pistol-handle a very great advantage to any gun whatever; in taking aim, you hold the gun much steadier, and it is brought to bear much quicker; and by enabling you to hold it more firmly to the shoulder, the recoil is lessened, and the gun shoots stronger. Your gunmaker, it is true, recommendeth it not; "becase," as Paddy saith, there is extra labour, without additional pay, and that's what there is. To all outward appearance, this pistol-handle is cut out of the solid, but it is very often fixed on with a wooden pin and glue only, which answers all practical purposes just as well, and looks as well, the line of junction being obliterated by the chequering.

When a stock is too heavy, as maple especially is wont to be, it is easily made lighter by drilling out a portion of the wood, with a brace and bit, from under the heel-plate; but loading the butt with lead, in order to counteract the opposite evil, is not a plan I admire; in this case I prefer increasing the weight of the heel-plate itself.

Whenever an incipient crack is discovered near the lock-plate, as is often the case, from the jar of the recoil, let the

gunmaker put a judiciously placed pin or two into the stock, which will, generally, prevent the crack from extending farther.

Stocks, for heavy guns, are best chequered forwards, *i. e.*, in that part which is under the breech, as well as in the handle, as they carry better thus. Some of the gentlemen of the trap have the chequering extended even still farther forwards, for better hold in aiming.

Some shooters, in aiming, object to place the left hand forward, in which case a piece of ebony, fixed in front of the trigger-guard, enables a person to take a much steadier aim, and to hold the gun much more firmly to the shoulder.

Some prefer stocks full in the butt, alleging that they fit the shoulder better, and tend to ease the recoil; whilst others prefer those which are narrow and deep; the latter, decidedly, look the best, and, in my opinion, are the best. Purdey's stocks are beautiful models, and are often taken as such, and all come well out at the point of the heel-plate.

Steel escutcheons, for the bolts, are preferable to those of silver or gold; but a silver or gold shield, with crest and cipher, certainly rather sets off a gun, distinguishes it from others, and, if it be stolen, may aid in its recovery.

The stock of a double gun is best capped with steel; for a single, horn may answer the purpose.

Scroll-guards and cheek-pieces, especially the former, find but little favour in the eyes of the generality of sportsmen; nevertheless I like the latter, if small, neat, and well defined, as Purdey makes them; and the former he applies to those beautiful little double rifles of his, with excellent effect—the guard answering all the purposes of a pistol grip, without its clumsy appearance.

A stock that is too long cannot be brought to bear quick enough, and, when too short, cannot be held with sufficient

firmness to the shoulder; although a slight extreme in the former instance is the less inimical of the two, to good shooting; and if the gun do not fit the shoulder, and come up well to the eye of the shooter, without constraining him to lower his head too much, it will be comparatively useless to him. Straight stocked guns are monstrously ugly, and recoil the most of all; nevertheless, numbers use stocks that are *rather* too much bent, and that without discovering the error, if at all, until their best shooting days are over.

The casting off is also an essential and a nice point to be attended to, in order to make a gun mount to perfection; and though most shooters think that they themselves best know what will suit them best, this is by no means always the case; for an intelligent gunmaker, taking a view of his customer, as to his make and shape, and the manner in which he brings his gun up to his shoulder, will often fit him better than he would have suited himself; and when once exactly suited, both he and the gunmaker should keep the usual model of thin wood, with the name written upon it.

Were I to keep a gun exclusively for pigeon-shooting, it should have no heel-plate; and, of course, no rib nor ramrod, to avoid useless weight; for, in my opinion, no gun with a heel-plate mounts so pleasantly as that which is without one.

LOCKS.

When we contrast the rude match-lock of our forefathers, with one of our most highly finished modern gun-locks, we are at once lost in amazement at the tardy progress of improvement, and at the extraordinary pitch of perfection to

which the latter has attained; and, certainly, a well-finished lock is a piece of mechanism at once curious and elegant.

Of locks in present use there are two kinds, the back-actioned and the bar lock; the latter is the favourite with the generality of sportsmen. I cannot say that I have ever used the former, except for a stanchion-gun, for which it is beyond all comparison the best. It was the invention of the present Mr. Nock, a name every shooter ought to respect—I had almost said to venerate—if for no other reason than for the solid benefits conferred upon the sporting world, by the late celebrated man whose patronymic he bears; and, in my opinion, no back-actioned locks are better fitted, or look so small and neat, as upon the present Mr. Nock's own guns. Indeed, his workmanship throughout would have done credit to his great progenitor, and clearly shews that, as yet, "the date of Nock" is not likely to be "out." *Esto perpetua!*

The objections I have heard alleged against back-actioned locks, are, that they are cold to the hand, and are let down into, and, therefore, weaken the stock in its weakest part; although neither of these objections in any wise affects stanchion-guns. Among their alleged advantages are the following:—that no flash can get inside the lock; that it is brought nearer (a decided advantage in stanchion-guns) to the breech-end, whereby the communication with the cap, or primer, is shortened; and yet, if the barrel burst, the hand is saved; or, at all events, is less liable to injury from the lock not being in the way. It also appears to me that the back-actioned lock is less liable to occasion cracks in the stock from the recoil of the gun, than which nothing is more hateful, or tends more to spoil the look of a gun. But, for my own part, except for stanchion-guns, on the whole I prefer the bar lock.

They who have handled the locks of Joe Manton in the zenith of his day, in the best days of flint and steel, will

recollect, nay, never *can* forget, their sweetness of movement, and oiliness of tell: if not perfection itself, they, at all events, left nothing to desire. But as the percussion system requires a heavier fall of the cock, and, therefore, a stronger main-spring to explode the cap, or primer, and to prevent the cock from flying back, the movements of even the very best locks, now-a-days, are not, indeed *cannot* be, quite so smooth and magically harmonious as they were during the Augustine age of locks to which we have just adverted. Still, locks with springs of *equal strength, and similar temper*, as they always ought to be, may be made not only free from harshness, but elastic and musical; as any one who has shot with Mr. Purdey's guns for as many years as I have done will be able to attest.

In estimating, therefore, the locks of modern days, whilst we pay, as in duty bound, the highest compliments to the late Mr. Manton, we must not (as many do) run away with the fallacious impression that the art of lock-making perished with him, or that it has retrograded. No such thing; for the best percussion locks of the present day are, in point of manufacture, at the least, equal to what the best flint locks ever were, and equally well adapted to the purpose for which they are intended. The fact is, in the best flint locks, the scear-spring was so weak as to cause it to press so lightly on the tumbler that there was no perceptible friction; and the main-spring, being then only about twelve pounds, the movements were oily and pleasant. But the main-spring being now from fifteen to eighteen pounds, the lock, of course, would not be safe with so light a scear-spring; and hence, as I have already stated, the movements cannot be so pleasing to the touch—the only advantage, if such it be, which we have lost by the change from flint and steel to percussion!

The lighter the lock-plate is made, so long as it be sufficiently substantial to secure it from bending, which would derange its every movement, the better; hence the very best of iron should be employed in its manufacture. The best gun-lock forgers use nothing but horse-nail stubs; and whoever imagines that the art of Vulcan is one too rude to admit of any exhibition of dexterity, let him stand by * * *, or other first-rate London workmen in this department, and see *how he handles a piece of iron!* All his forgings are in beautiful form, "fit for engravings," very little superfluous metal being left for the lock-filer to reduce. The lock-plate and cocks, after having been engraved, are hardened with bone dust; the "blueing" of the furniture is effected by means of charcoal.

Let the advocates for the cheap and ugly use inferior locks; when, for certain, they will find them like—

> "A German clock,
> Ever a repairing, ever out of tune,
> And never going right."

And with this remark, courteous reader, I beg to turn the key on the subject of locks.

COCKS, OR STRIKERS.

For copper cap-guns, the "dolphin" cock, or striker, with a deep concave head, to prevent the copper flying on the explosion of the cap, may be said to be in universal use, and is, of all others, the simplest and the best. Purdey invented and added a back shield on the false breech, which makes cap-guns perfectly safe.

It is of the greatest moment for the surface of the cavity

of the striker to hit fair and evenly on the top of the nipple.

For copper tube-guns the head of the striker must, of course, be formed differently from that destined for caps; and, in fact, will vary in shape, in some degree, according to the mode of applying the tube to the projecting touch-hole.

It is ever advisable to have duplicate strikers by you, as they occupy but little room in a gun-case, and, if one break, you thus experience no interruption to your sport.

STOPS AND GUARDS.

I HAVE, I believe, tried, or at the least have examined, most of the stops and guards, "gravitating" and otherwise, that have ever been submitted to the sporting world for preventing the accidental discharge of guns; and the only one I ever saw, till lately, deserving of much notice, was "the patent safeguard," brought out by Purdey several years ago; but, as he has, in great measure, abandoned the plan, and as Mr. Lang, of the Haymarket, has improved upon it, I may merely state that it can be applied to any gun; that it is self-acting, and so constructed as to put it out of the power of a man to injure himself by his own carelessness. This "new safety guard" bolts the lock when down on the nipple, at half, and at full cock, and yet relieves itself by the mere pressure applied to the guard at the moment of firing: it gives little or no additional trouble in cleaning, the working parts being so disposed as not to be affected by the weather; combines simplicity with perfect security, and is not liable to be out of repair.

To prevent the possibility of danger from loading with a

barrel cocked, or from going through hedge or covert, stops and guards on guns may be desirable for a beginner, an infirm person, a large shooting party, or a mad-brained fellow; but to a cool and careful hand, who knows a gun from a pair of tongs, they may be said to be useless, and rather in the way, "as the antiquated spinster remarked when she discarded her bustles."

TRIGGERS.

THERE is nothing more hateful or more adverse to that freedom of movement and unity of action which constitute the beauty and perfection of the art of shooting flying, than a hard pulling trigger; and, on the contrary, one which is too light in the pull is *dangerous*, as the gun is liable to go off with a touch before it reaches the shoulder, and will not improbably cut the finger in the recoil. Hence, extremes, nearly always objectionable, are particularly so here. But it is essential, not only that the triggers of *all* your guns should be regulated by the gunmaker so as to avoid these extremes, but so that all may act by a precisely similar quantum of digital pressure, be that what it may. Hence rifle practice, especially when the hair-trigger is used, will be found extremely inimical to good shooting with a shot-gun; as I have myself experienced repeatedly. When, therefore, a pigeon match, or the 12th of August is pending—ware-rifle! and practise a little beforehand with the gun you are about to use on such occasions; or, for certain, you will forget the change of guns, or rather, from habit, will draw the triggers too delicately; and in consequence will shoot behind your birds. Indeed, such is the force of habit, a man who accus-

toms himself to the elegant art of rifle-shooting, may be trusted with, if he do not actually require, lighter triggers than ordinary for ordinary shooting. At all events, I found such to be my own case.

I may just mention that the pull of ordinary triggers is, for the left barrel, seven, and for the right, six pounds, the former requiring a pound more owing to the leverage of the trigger. Three pounds for the right, and four for the left, are the lightest pulls that can be trusted with any degree of safety.

The trigger of a stanchion-gun ought to have no guard, and should also be made to move forwards on a hinge.

THE FLINT AND THE DETONATOR.

"In less than half a century a flint gun will, we think, be no small curiosity."—BLAINE.

THE detonating principle, or mode of ignition by percussion, is now admitted, almost universally, to answer best for all sorts of guns, from the longest cannons to the smallest shoulder-guns.

Some are confident that the flint shoots stronger than the detonator, and others are not less thoroughly convinced of the contrary; but all are unanimous in the admission that the difference between the two is at no time considerable. If, therefore, it can be proved, as it *can*, that the detonator has the superiority over the flint in most, if not in all other

essential points, and they are not few, it must be abundantly evident that the adoption of the latter, to the exclusion of the former, has been a step founded in wisdom, and that it is now useless to lavish words upon the subject; at all events, in so far as field sports are concerned.

For my own part, so convinced, from the very first, have I been of the superiority of the detonating system over the flint lock, that, from the days of Forsythe (to whom I was a pretty good customer) to the present time, I have not fired twenty shots with a flint gun; though I have used guns on the percussion principle of various weights, from five pounds and a quarter to twelve stone! and not many during that period have, I believe, fired more powder and shot away than I have done in all weathers.

I have always looked upon experimental trials, to determine the relative strength of shooting between the percussion and flint modes of ignition, as of but little use to the sportsman, how valuable soever they might or might not prove in promoting the art of war; or how interesting soever in themselves as a matter of philosophic investigation.

I know several gunners who have had their punt guns altered from flint to percussion, and who, to a man, declare that those guns kill farther than before; and on no account could they be persuaded to revert to the old mode of ignition. This, at the least, serves to show what we all of us have known for the last twenty years—that guns on the percussion principle kill well! But the longest shots I myself ever made, or ever saw made—and I have witnessed some tolerably long ones, were with guns on the percussion principle.

A flint lock answers still extremely well for a blunderbuss, or for pistols for house defence; better, perhaps, than any other plan; but for sporting purposes is obsolete, and ought to be so for the army. I notice it, therefore, only out of respect to

an honest, well meaning, well tried, departed old friend and useful servant of the public, who did his duty to his country in his day, but whose title became extinct at his decease, which took place (in a thunder-storm) before Canton, in May 1841, and whose epitaph is—DEAD SLOW!

No person, now-a-days, travels post, or on the top of a heavy drag, who has an opportunity of going per railroad: "as the young lady at Newcastle-upon-Tyne remarked to papa on her safe return from Gretna Green."

RIFLES.

THE modern two-grooved rifle, though but an ancient plan revived, would be none the worse on that account, if found possessing a higher grade of merit than the best plans in present use: but, unfortunately, this is not the case.

The objections against these double grooves are

First, that the extreme spinning motion given to the ball by a whole spiral turn in the grooves of the barrel, occasions a sacrifice of velocity, and, therefore, of range; because the ball is thus made to revolve in its flight twice or thrice as often as, under the percussion system, is found to be not only sufficient, but the best plan for projecting the plain spherical ball with accuracy and effect.

Secondly, that in consequence of the depth and sharpness of the grooves and the projecting belt or zone adapted to them, there is the very great disadvantage of the inadmissibility of "a well-greased patch of calico;" which, as Robins remarks, "by its interposition between the bullet and the rifle, prevents the lead from being cut by them; and thus the

great evil of a rough exterior is avoided"—the very evil which the inventor of the double grooves appears to have studied to create in the worst possible degree; for the belted ball, instead of boring its way smoothly through the air, acts upon it like a little winnowing machine.

Thirdly, when the barrel is dirty, the ball is forced down with difficulty, which is apt to compress the edges of the zone, and, consequently, to destroy its hold in the grooves, and, therefore, to derange its flight in a greater or less degree. Besides, as there are only two opposing edges, the gun soon gets worn, when it does not shoot so well.

If a large charge be put in, the ball jams, and shoots lower, instead of higher, as it ought to do.

With rifles of the common kind, the best size for the chase, or red-deer, and the larger animals, is an ounce rifle; length of barrel, from two feet four inches, to two feet six inches; an eighteen or twenty bore is a sufficient size for fallow-deer. For mark-firing, the barrel should be longer. For rook and rabbit-shooting, the weight of a small single pea-rifle should be about four pounds five ounces; the ball, one hundred to the pound; the barrel, two feet two inches long. The weight of a small double, for such shooting, should be about five pounds eight ounces; the ball, eighty to the pound; barrels, two feet two inches long.

GUNPOWDER

Is the very life-blood of shooting; for, if indifferent, the very best guns are, comparatively, of but little use. If good at first, and afterwards kept perfectly dry, as it ought *always* to be, it will retain its virtues, unimpaired, for a considerable

time; but if it once get damp, and particularly if it remain so for any time, the grains have a tendency to dissolution, or decomposition, which no after-drying can ever so fully recover, as to restore the powder to its pristine strength. It ought to be kept wholly excluded from atmospheric influence, as the saltpetre, especially if not of the purest kind (and it is often impregnated with marine salt, which vastly increases its tendency to absorb moisture), readily imbibes damp; and powder will preserve its strength—to say nothing of greater safety from accidental explosion—better for two years in tin, than for one in wood. When, therefore, either a sportsman, or a retailer in the country, receives his gunpowder from the maker, or the gunmaker, in sealed packets, or in pound canisters, he should forthwith take them out of the cask, and put them into a large canister, or other metallic magazine, made for the purpose, with a close cover and padlock at the top, and place it in a dry situation—say, against the wall, behind the kitchen-chimney: and it may be observed that powder sent in sealed packets, should be immediately poured from the paper in which it is enclosed, into empty, dry canisters, and be *corked tight;* but the "treble strong" powder, in canisters, being better secured against damp, fire, and crushing, is ever infinitely preferable to the "treble sealed" in paper.

Where, however, expense is not so much an object, the best and safest plan for the keeping, or conveyance of gunpowder, is "Walker's improved Patent Gunpowder Barrel," formed of copper. These barrels, of various sizes, "to hold from 8 lbs. to 100 lbs., are sold by W. Slater, successor to James Walker and Co., 332, Wapping, London, where the strongest possible certificates of their economy and utility may be seen." As some of my sporting friends have purchased these, at my suggestion, and have expressed their approbation

of them, I have no hesitation in recommending them to all my brethren of the trigger; nor have I the slightest interest in doing so, for I know nothing whatever of Mr. Slater, nor of the amenities of Wapping.

The months of June and July are the most advantageous for laying in a season's stock of powder; and to be always sure of the best, it should be had direct from the manufacturers themselves, and, if possible, warm from the mills; as that of the most recent manufacture (which the maker's trial has proved to be the strongest), canistered immediately on the spot, is the best. But if the sportsman do not procure his powder direct from the mills, in pound canisters, packed in a cask, he will be best served by the gunmakers, who generally lay in a fresh stock for sale, a month or two previous to the commencement of the shooting season, and when their old stock will, probably, have been nearly exhausted; moreover, they usually procure the *best* powder, "because on that the killing of their guns must depend;" and, for a similar reason, are careful to keep it dry; for which purpose they, in general, have better convenience than the shop and warehouse men, who sell so many different articles, and who seldom have a proper place set apart for gunpowder. At the gunmakers', too, you generally find a larger assortment, as they keep the powder of different first-rate makers, to suit the various fancies of their customers.

As to the *quality* of the powder of different manufacturers, though that of the same manufacture is not always equal in efficacy, yet all of repute turn out a granulated article, if not of pretty nearly equal strength, still as good as need be for all the purposes of common sporting. But observe, I speak here of their best powder.

I have, for the most part, shot with Messrs. Curtis and Harvey's cylinder powder, "for percussion guns;" it is well

granulated, being hard to the touch, and the grains equal in size and form, and of a glossy black exterior; it fires quick and strong, produces a red fire from the muzzle, and burns clear. Bad, or dirty powder, causes a rougher coat inside the barrel, and, therefore, weaker shooting. The round-grained powder is the best, because it does not adhere to the sides of the barrel. The powder of Messrs. Pigou and Co. is also admirable; and some of our crack pigeon-shots, to whom the very best powder is of more consequence than to the game shooter, and who are carefully observant of the practical results produced by the powders of different makers, swear by Mr. Lawrence's new, treble-strong No. 2, which is bold in the grain. Mr. L. has also a new powder of a still coarser grain, made expressly for tube-guns, which is much thought of in quarters quite competent to decide upon its merits.

As for the *epreuvette*, *powder-proof*, or *trier*, it requires such nicety, both in its manufacture and use, and, if good for anything, is so costly, that, to most shooters, it would be superfluous; but when the instrument, made with truth and exactness, is in good hands, accurate results may, doubtless, be obtained from it. At the same time, I repeat, if a good quantity of the best powder be procured, from any mill of repute, the shooter may rely on its quality for all field purposes; all he has to do being to keep it good as long as it lasts. It is an article, too, which will bear a liberal discount for cash.

Custom appears to have rendered the airing, or drying of powder, preparatory to taking the field, a sort of duty, incumbent upon the sportsman; and as, with care, it will never do harm, and is often advantageous, I will proceed to give the plan I have practised for the last thirty years, although I have nearly matured another, which will, I think, be far better. The old plan, however, has this advantage, that you need

never be at a loss to carry it into execution, as the humblest cottage can, at any time, supply all you want for that purpose.

Take, then, two common dinner-plates, pop them into an oven, and there let them remain until just too hot for the fingers; then, whilst one person takes them out, by means of a dry cloth, let another immediately pop in two more. Wipe the hot ones all over with a dry linen cloth, or silk kerchief, and place them on a table remote from a fire, or, what is far better, in a room without one. Then, as soon as you can bear your hand upon one of them, having filled a detached measure with five or six drachms of powder, pour this all over the plate (rim and all), placed at a considerable distance from the larger mass of powder. If this do not take fire, you may unhesitatingly pour out the remainder. Then, filling your measure again, scatter the powder, as before, upon the other plate, and so of all others. Shift the powder from the cool to the hot plates, and keep turning it over with a dry horn spoon; and by the time the first two plates are cool, the other two will be ready to succeed them. It is quick, and rather warm work, while it lasts, but so are all *heats* for *Plates*.

The empty powder-flask should be held near the fire until it is warmed through, when the top may be screwed off, and the powder gradually poured in, through a funnel; the bottom of the flask being tapped gently two or three times on the table, to settle the powder, by which means the flask may be made to contain a good deal more than if not thus shaken. But it must be recollected that by loading *immediately* after firing, you load "whilst the iron is hot;" and, consequently, after the first discharge, the gun itself, in a measure, dries the powder, the heat of the metal evaporating the moisture.

The less powder is shaken the better: and though some sportsmen find amusement, or music, in snapping the powder-flask, yet such practice is reprehensible, as the spring may

thus be strained, or "the thumb-bit" broken, and by avoiding the habit, you avoid also the possibility of danger from accidental explosion, which, however unaccountable it may appear, has, ere now, been consequent on this inconsiderate practice.

POWDER-FLASK.

I HAVE a long article, in manuscript, now before me, containing the history of powder-flasks, "from the earliest ages to the present time;" but fancy I hear the reader exclaim, "what's the use of spinning a long yarn on powder-flasks, when we all know that the best is SYKES'S PATENT POWDER-FLASK?"

Agreed: I will, therefore, confine myself to a description of all but it alone, and to what I conceive to be its recent improvements.

The common tin spring powder-flask, when got up in the best style, as Joe Manton used to get it up, with a brass cap on the charge, movable at pleasure, and answering the double purpose of holding the charge and of excluding dirt, was lighter in weight and in appearance, and, in most other respects, was fully equal, if not superior, to Sykes's; yet it was inferior to the latter, in one point of paramount importance—that of *safety!*

In the old flask, when the *cutter* was moved back, a few grains of powder often lodged about the chamber; and if a bit of wadding, or any other combustible substance, lodged in the same place, the loose powder was frequently ignited by the motion of the cutter, which, communicating to the larger por-

tion, injured the person who carried the flask: moreover, a latent spark left in the barrel, after the first discharge of the gun, would also, now and then, from the blowing up of the charge, in the act of loading, occasion the shattering of the shooter's hand, not seldom rendering amputation necessary. By Sykes's contrivance, however, this source of danger was wholly removed, as the chamber is completely shut up; the cutter (in which is a circular aperture, to allow the powder to pass into the charger) being moved by a spring, worked between two plates of metal. This *safety-stop*, as it may be termed, gave Sykes's flask the precedence of all others; and, most assuredly, it has no present equal, nor need it, I think, fear any rival. Indeed, Mr. Sykes richly merits the best thanks of the sporting world for having perfected this invention.

At the same time, as the charger is fixed in an upright position, and upon the flask itself, and is without a detached cap, it cannot, after all, be said, that there is absolutely no *possibility* of danger from communication, how preponderant soever the odds in favour of safety may be, and, certainly, are; but, with a loose cap, danger is annihilated, at least, if the cap be always used.

There are also two recent improvements of the flask in question, which I will proceed to name. The one is the substitution of a new, long screw, in lieu of the short one, in the sliding charger. Every shooter must, at times, have been bothered by that diminutive screw of the old plan; but now a much larger, longer, and better made one, passes through a small brass pipe, fixed (purposely to receive it, and to keep the powder from corroding it) directly across the interior of the charger. To this plan I have but one objection, *viz.*, that when the charge of powder exceeds four drachms, the pipe, occupying so much room, requires the charger to be so

much longer, that, in the act of filling it, the end of the fore-finger does not reach the top with the proper degree of ease. This, however, does not affect shooters in general, as but few use a charge exceeding four drachms.

The other improvement, as I term it, is my own, and consists of a solid charger, smooth inside and out; and which, as it does away with the screw and the inner case altogether, enables you to have the charger made so much shorter, and, therefore, more convenient to handle, especially where large charges are used; and, moreover, admits a cap, which Sykes's rising charger does not admit of. By having a few of these solid chargers, of various sizes, they are very readily exchanged, if required; when the same flask answers for the smallest partridge-piece and the largest duck-gun, as I have often experienced on one and the same day.

The quantity of powder each charger contains should be legibly engraven upon it, thus—2¾ drs.

The shooter can have caps to these solid chargers, or not, as he thinks fit; but, whether or not, he will find no chargers like them for service, nor any which look so well, or which are so easily kept clean; and as they fit the same male screws as Sykes's chargers, either can be applied, at pleasure, to the same flask.

There are flasks on Sykes's principle manufactured entirely of lanthorn horn, lightly brass-bound all round; these are remarkably neat, and of all others are the lightest to carry; and, being transparent, are highly satisfactory to such *deep* philosophers as wish to *see to the bottom* of everything; and especially to such shooters as are always upon the fidgets lest their ammunition should not outlast the day; for by these you perceive, at a glance of the eye, how the powder expends from the pouring out of the first to that of the last charge. In choosing a flask of this sort, be careful to select

one free from cracks; and horn being liable to warp, they should not be exposed to too great heat. From their brittleness and fragility, they, of course, require to be used with greater care than ordinary, but with such attention are very durable. I used one for three successive seasons, when it was not a pin the worse, and then only parted from it, with reluctance, at the request of a sporting friend.

Some of the copper flasks have a circular piece of horn, or, what is technically called, "transparency," in the centre of each side, to afford a peep into the interior: these are amusing for boys.

Some prefer tin, others copper flasks; the latter are the more durable, and the less liable to bulge: but the former have not that unpleasant smell which the latter communicate to the hand, and have the very great advantage of being much lighter to carry. Those flasks which have the spring outside the cutter are preferable to those which have it within, as "the ringed thumb-bit" is not so liable to break off in the former as in the latter instance.

In my opinion, the best and safest powder-flask going, is Sykes's patent tin powder-flask of the common flat shape, covered with hog's skin, with the spring outside the cutter, and having the above-named solid chargers, with well-fitting caps, or detached measures. This kind of flask holds firmly in, and is not cold to the hand; keeps the powder the driest; slips the easiest into, and is the least liable to slip out of, the pocket, and is at any time made to look nearly as good as new by means of the same scouring liquid you use for saddles or boot-tops.

That distinguished sportsman, the late Sir Harry Goodricke, always used a narrow circular tin flask, some ten or eleven inches long, to prevent it turning in the pocket; and I have no doubt that many sportsmen would prefer this kind of flask to all others.

CLEANING POWDER-FLASKS.

Should the movements of your powder-flasks become stiff or obstructed from any cause, never attempt to employ force; but, if unprovided with proper tools for taking the top in pieces, or not being yourself quite *au fait* at the work (and with Sykes's flask it is no very easy matter), send it to a gun or whitesmith for the purpose. Fine emery and oil, or any of the advertised pastes, may answer for cleaning the brass or tin work; but sand or other gritty particle is bad, being apt to obstruct the free movement of the spring. For removing the dirt which sometimes collects behind the spring, a hard tooth-brush is very useful; as also for cleaning the screws of ramrods, the threads of screws, &c.

SYKES'S SPRING POWDER-CHARGERS.

These chargers have a spring at each end, and a division in the centre, on the plan of the steel shot-chargers, and, like them, hold a single loading in each compartment. They have the advantage of being perfectly safe, and, where game is scarce, and you have an attendant along with you to carry the powder-flask, may be found convenient. They are also handy enough to pop into your pocket (along with a steel shot-charger), on any sudden emergency, when you just snatch up your gun for a single shot or two, as at a carrion-crow, a hawk, or other more *rara avis*.

SHOT, WITH REFERENCE TO ITS MANUFACTURE.

Some thirty years ago, I recollect ascending that beautiful little edifice, the shot-tower at Derby, to witness the process of the manufacture of shot. Around the top are windows to admit air at pleasure, on account of the vapour arising from the boiling lead in the caldron being so pernicious to the health of the operator, from the arsenic mixed with it, though in the proportion of a few pounds only to the ton. But one person is required to pour the lead into the caldron, and he told me, that the employment was *certain* to cut short the existence of any one who engaged in it; that three or four of them, therefore, took it in turn to work for a limited period only, and thus relieved each other, and recruited themselves, living, as one may say, in the enjoyment of what the poet calls "vitality of poison." Since then I have visited the shot-towers at Lambeth, and the one at Newcastle; the latter, the loftiest, I believe, in the kingdom, is 175 feet high, and one foot and a half only out of the perpendicular; so that its vibration, on a windy day, is *rayther* awful, and the situation of the man atop —like many other exalted situations—not the most enviable. A mine, called Allen Heads, in Northumberland, the property of Thomas Beaumont, Esq., furnishes the best lead for the purpose of shot-making.

The size of shot, of which the most is sold at home and abroad, from the Newcastle tower, is No. 5; but that is equal to the London No. 4. The 3 A of the latter is called L B at Newcastle, though precisely the same sized shot; and, in fact, is sent from that place to London, in consequence, as a previous author has observed, of "Messrs. Walkers' London

tower not being sufficiently high for the rounding so large a grain." Mr. Walker, jun., however, I think, told me that they are enabled to manufacture shot of a similar size, at their Chester tower, as well as at Newcastle. These heavy *drops* descending with vast increasing velocity, for want of sufficient space of air to pass through, in falling from a lesser height, come in contact with the water (purposely placed in a tub, at the bottom, to receive them) before they have had time to assume a globular form; and hence it is, that perfection of rounding, for this largest of all drop-shot, can alone be obtained by its falling from the summit of a very lofty tower.

I have already stated, that the man on the top of the tower has a boiling caldron of lead, mixed with arsenic, alongside of him. In his left hand he holds the handle of a small sieve (fixed in a frame), which he keeps supplying with melted lead, from time to time, by means of a ladle. When the shot are taken out of the water-tub below, some are oblong; these are separated from the rest, by the whole being rolled down a board, placed in a slanting direction; the oblong, or imperfect ones, remaining on the board, whilst the round shot rolls off. They are then sifted, to get them of a size, several different sizes being made at one casting. The finishing process is the glazing of the shot, which is effected by shaking them in a bag containing a portion of finely-powdered black lead, or plumbago; which not only improves the shot in appearance, but prevents it from going in lumps, or from what is called "clubbing," when fired; it also prevents oxydation on the surface of the lead, which would be poisonous, or, at all events, injurious to the consumers of the game shot with it.

The size of shot varies a good deal in different places, and at Bristol, I believe, the usual order is reversed. Sykes's graduated powder and shot measure, supersedes the necessity of weighing the shot, if at any time you wish to ascertain the

number of pellets in an ounce, the only correct mode of computation, as there is often considerable variation in the size of shot, purporting to be the same from the manufacturer.

SCHEDULE OF SHOT, according with that of the firm of Messrs. Walker and Parker, of the patent shot tower, Lambeth.

Patent Drop-Shot.

	In one oz.		In one oz.
No. 10, about -	1,700	No. 2, about -	110
9, - - -	1,000	1, - - -	80
8, - - -	600	B, - - -	75
7, - - -	350	B B, - - -	60
6, - - -	270	A, - - -	50
5, - - -	220	A A, - - -	40
4, - - -	180	A A A, (the largest drop shot)	32
3, - - -	130		

Mould Shot.

S S S G, - - -	17	M G, - - -	9
S S G, - - -	15	L G, - - -	5
S G, - - -	11		

Messrs. Walker's scale appears to be the tacitly approved standard. If I go east, west, north, or south, I know which is *my* No. 3, 4, 5, &c., no matter what be the figure marked on the shot-bag; and I apprehend any other shooter, of tolerable observation and experience, will be at no loss in this respect. In case, therefore, of your being in some remote part, where you get better shooting than accommodations, and where you have occasion to send a person some distance for shot, your best plan is not to specify any particular number, but to give him a few shot-corns as a sample of the size you require; to instruct him to see the comparison made; and to pelt him with the shot, on his return, if the stupid dolt have made a blunder.

An ordinary handful contains just one pound of shot.

The following account of the manufacture of patent lead shot, I beg to transcribe from the fourth annual volume of "Arcana of Science and Art." "The process is, indeed, extremely simple and elegant; and, being productive of an article that may be deemed *perfect* in its construction, it is well deserving of a more particular notice than we have ever met with in print.

"Previous to the invention of the patent process we are about to describe, the small shot were chiefly made by cutting sheet lead into little cubes, which were rounded by long continued friction against one another, produced by enclosing them in an iron barrel, which was made to rotate on its axis until the cubes were reduced into spheres. Another mode, considerably analogous to the present, was also in use, that of causing lead, and also lead combined with a small proportion of arsenic, to drop, in a fluid state, through a kind of sieve (having perforations of a suitable size), into a vessel of water placed only a few inches beneath it. To prevent, as much as possible, the numerous imperfections resulting from this mode, a considerable degree of management and skill was required in the operator. The water, we understand, was covered with a thin film of oil, and the sieve with a stratum, an inch or more in depth, of the dross which forms on the surface of the melted metal, this dross, or scoriæ, acting as a filter to separate the metal into minutest portions, as the latter was poured over it in successive portions, by ladling it from a contiguous caldron. It will readily be perceived that shot thus produced, however skilful the operator, must have possessed great variety in size and form, and that but a small proportion of a casting were at all adapted to the use of a sportsman. At length, in 1782, one William Watt, a plumber and shot-maker, of the city of Bristol, DREAMED that he was engaged in his usual employment of casting shot in the church tower

of St. Mary (in the aforesaid city), and that the produce of his labour, which fell from a very great elevation into the water, was of a very superior description. Reflecting upon this manufacture of his imagination, he became of opinion that a better process could not be contrived, and he was permitted to make a real trial of it in the identical site of his dream, the lofty tower of St. Mary; the experiment was as successful as the most ardent theorist could expect, the globules of metal becoming hard by the cooling influence of their descent through the air, so as not to be injured in their figure by subsequent concussion against the surface of the water in which they fell. Mr. William Watt had, besides, made some improvement, it is supposed, in the preparation of the alloy used; but whether he dreamed this, also, we have not been informed; certain it is that he took out a patent for his dream; and we are told, upon good authority, that he afterwards turned his lead into gold, by selling his patent right for the sum of thirty-six thousand pounds!"

Oh! reader, what a coinage of the imagination! what an ευρηκα was this! Who would not indulge in leaden slumbers, and be called a *dreamer?* What a plum for our plumber! What a shower of gold for Billy Watts! How vast the difference betwixt the shot which pays, and "paying the shot!"

This truly valuable discovery, of course, led to the building of "patent shot towers;" and I have been given to understand that the patent is somehow evaded by certain parties having built shot towers *wholly underground*, basing them at the bottom of a deep coal-pit shaft, and *under*selling those that are "all fair and *above*" ground. But it is to be hoped such edifices are without foundation; at all events if they have "a local habitation and a name," they are no "castles in the air!"

SHOT, AS AN AGENT IN SHOOTING WITH SHOULDER-GUNS.

ALTHOUGH it may appear somewhat paradoxical, yet it does not always follow, that that which is true in theory is the best in practice. It is generally, and very justly, supposed, that small-bored guns will shoot small shot better, in proportion, than large, because the former lies more compact in, and not so far up, the barrel; in other words, does not "pile" so much, or form so long a column, and hence receives the full force of the powder more effectually, without being so much compressed, or without unnecessary friction being created; to say nothing of the fact, that, in a long column, the hindermost shots drop short. And yet it does not necessarily follow that small shot is at all times the best for small guns in the sporting field.

No man is a warmer advocate than I am for trying guns at iron targets; nevertheless, there are lessons to be gathered from actual field practice, which no target whatever can teach: attentive observation in the field is not only a powerful auxiliary to private trials at home, but, in some instances, is actually indispensable to the acquisition of a knowledge of correct results.

There is no one point in which the opinions of sportsmen are found to be more diametrically opposed to each other, than in the size of shot to be used for shooting game. I shall, therefore, endeavour to give my sentiments with that moderate confidence which becomes one discussing a subject that appears to be held *in dubio;* but who, at the same time, has been a constant and regular attendant at the lectures of experience.

In an old manuscript of mine I find the following remarks. "No. 7 is the best sized shot for snipes, either in the loose charge, or in Eley's cartridges;" but I would never use it in any way for any other description of game; because, at short distances, it fills them too full of shot (a bad stuffing, and hard of digestion); at moderate distances, it wounds (often mortally) without bringing to bag, and at long shots its effects are no better than so much rape seed. The bony structure of the snipe, as any person who has picked those delicious bones may see, is extremely delicate, and its flesh easily penetrable; its neck and wings, too, are not only very slender, but very long in proportion to its size, nor is it by any means a hard bird, though not so soft as some will have it to be: but a partridge, or a grouse, especially the former, is the reverse of all this.

I tried No. 7, in Eley's cartridges, at pigeons at twenty-one yards distance from the trap, and found that, with a tolerably stout single gun, and the best powder, but few of them could live if I took them quick; otherwise, some either wholly escaped, or fell dead out of bounds. I marked all those which fell thus, and afterwards had them plucked and examined at leisure; and, in many instances, discovered that those which had fallen at considerably more than a hundred yards from the trap, had as many as six or seven pellets in them, some of which had gone fairly through them in the direction of vital parts; and I am confident that a few of those which flew out of sight were mortally wounded. But when I substituted the same weight of charge of No. 6 for the No. 7, out of twenty-three successive shots not a bird escaped.

Daniel tells us "there are many parts about the body of a bird wherein a pellet of No. 7 will affect its vitality equal to a pellet of No. 2;" and adds, "it is the number and not the magnitude of the pellets which kill on the spot." But what, I would ask, did my plucked pigeons prove, with all the ad-

vantage, too, of that superiority over the loose charge, in point of closeness and strength of shooting, which Eley's cartridge is well known to possess? The magnitude of the pellets (No. 6) had certainly more to do in the matter here than their number, inasmuch as the former was increased, the latter the contrary. The conclusion, therefore, which I drew from the above, was, that the hemorrhage from orifices so small as those made by pellets of No. 7, is so slow, that a strong bird is often enabled to fly out of sight before the blood has flowed sufficiently into the cavity of the chest to deprive it of strength, or to choke it. When, therefore, the gamekeeper contended in favour of small shot, that "they go between the feathers like pins and needles, whilst the large shot as often glance off as penetrate them," he was so far correct (at least in his first assertion) as regards short distances, but at moderate ones it is the prick of a spur to a horse, which only makes him go all the faster.

It has sometimes happened that when birds have been killed by small shot, the shooter has discovered, next the skin, a little ball of down enclosing a large shot. "Oh! oh!" quoth he, "I have it! Here's ocular demonstration of positive proof!" Lightly he trips him home; he has jumped at a conclusion; has embraced a cloud! "Small shot," avereth he, "kills farther than large." Poor man! he forgets that the small shot had penetrated vital parts (perhaps the brain), and that when the bird received the large shot it was thirty yards farther from the shooter than in his own case, and presented a far less fair shot. And thus it is that the most egregious fallacies, as to the superior killing properties of small shot over large, become riveted on the minds of sportsmen.

My general dislike to small shot (especially when loose shot was all "the go"), was engendered as early as my schoolboy days; for I was even then a diligent student of *propria*

quæ gunibus. In the month of July—though late in August is the best time—during a stormy north or north-east wind, the sea-gulls on the eastern coast come soaring over the cliff tops from north to south, when, by concealing yourself in the end of a ditch, there is often fine sport and good practice to be had for a juvenile. On these occasions I have very often killed a dozen, and, in one instance, thirty of these birds in a morning. The gun I then generally used was an excellent flint lock double, of the common size, with an eighteen bore; and when loaded with No. 6 in the right barrel, and No. 3 in the left, it so very often happened that I failed to kill with the former, and immediately afterwards brought down the same, or a fresh bird, with the latter at a much longer distance, that I became an advocate for large shot long before I took the field as a game shooter. Does this sea-gull story speak most in favour of the "magnitude" of pellets, or of their "numbers," as far as killing is concerned? or does it tend to corroborate the gamekeeper's "pin and needle" and "glancing off" phantasies?—for I know no bird whose feathers are closer, or which has the shot-repellant power of the sea-gull.

Having, therefore, settled the point of No. 7, as to game shooting, it may be remarked of the other sizes, from No. 6 to B upwards, that the propriety of their use, respectively, ought to be made to depend on the sort of shooter, of country shot in, of gun shot with, and of game shot at, rather than upon any fixed rules which might be laid down. But, supposing a man to be a pretty good, and a tolerably quick shot, to be endowed with good sense enough to eschew all very light guns and small bores, and to be as determined not to carry a weak, or an irregular shooting gun—then some approach may be made to definite rules. Then, I am of opinion that, in countries where game is not wild, the generality of shooters will kill more with No. 6, loose shot, in the right barrel (sup-

posing it to be always fired first), and No. 4 in the left, than by any other mode* of charging; but, if birds be rather wild, they will kill the most with the same sizes of shot in Eley's cartridges. Many (quick shots) would, I know, advocate No. 6 in *both* barrels; and both plans are soon tried.

But if the shooter prefer using but *one* size of shot at all times, which simplifies the business in an agreeable manner, then, whether he use loose shot or cartridges, let No. 4 or 5 be his choice: and this very simplification, and determination not to be bothered with shot of two sizes, is probably the reason why more shot is sold, of the medium size, than of any other. And for a shooter, who goes out for his morning's recreation, to shoot game at fair sporting distances *only*, like a gentleman, without any regard to destroying everything he shoots at, this, it must be confessed, is the best and most sportsmanlike plan; shot of this medium size being adapted to all seasons, and to all sorts of game, except snipes.

Lastly, if you really want game, and it be *very* wild, particularly grouse,—whether you use loose shot, or patent cartridges—No. 2 or 3, in the right barrel, and B in the left, are the approved recipes. Because, although I have long known, from target trials, that No. 4 is the largest size that can be made to shoot from a gun of moderate dimensions sufficiently close at sixty yards, even in Eley's cartridge, to insure anything like certainty of hitting; yet, at these long distances, *it* is apt to wound only; whilst No. 2 either misses altogether, or, when it hits, generally kills—because it flies straighter and stronger—and *every pill is a dose!* Let every shooter, however, please himself as to his mode of loading, for there is vast satisfaction in *that!*

* A cartridge, in the second barrel, will often be found more efficacious than loose shot; but this plan obliges you to carry both loose shot and cartridges.

Small shot fouls a gun, and causes it to recoil more than large; hence a higher charge of the latter may be used than of the former. Some sportsmen *mix* their shot, or use two different sizes in the same charge, and contend that the plan is advantageous; but this most certainly is *not* the case.

Very large shot, in a narrow-bored gun, is preposterous; and especially if the pellets lie unequally; they should always be such as reach *exactly* across the calibre.

NEW PATENT SHOT.

THE late Mr. Joseph Manton brought out a new kind of shot under this title, which was said to differ from the old patent shot in more respects than one, and it was also affirmed that these points of difference were improvements. Quicksilver, it was supposed, was infused into the lead, in lieu of arsenic, whereby the shot became harder and heavier, and, consequently, more destructive in its effects; and being thus, also, freed from deleterious properties, the game kept the longer: moreover, the barrel leaded far less than before. No one can deny that all these are real advantages, at any rate, *in se*, and yet this new shot is in but small request. I confess I have, myself, had no practical knowledge whatever of its effects, nor have I so much as even seen it; because, at the risk of incurring the reader's censure, I will admit that I very early imbibed an insuperable prejudice against it. For, on my having gravely intimated to an intelligent and experienced sporting friend, my full determination to try the "new patent shot," he laughed heartily at me; called it "the quicksilver

puff;" and would insist upon it that "the shot were only whitened by rolling them in quicksilver."

Eley's cartridges, however, obviate many of the disadvantages of the loose charge of the common patent shot, which may now be said to be in universal use.

SILVER SHOT.

Treating, as I now am, of the manufacture of shot, I ought not to omit to mention this very important variety of the projectile, which has been longer in vogue than any other. It is made in London only, and is composed entirely of silver, with sufficient alloy to harden it for use. Though more expensive than the quicksilver shot last named, it is yet considered quicker in its effects, and, on that account, is often called "the ready." It is very much used by indifferent shots, especially when on the moors, and desirous of despatching a hamper of grouse to a distant friend. It is also quite as often employed by fishermen as by shooters, and is said to be of extraordinary efficacy in killing heavy pike, trout, eels, barbel, and, occasionally, salmon. Like the other shot, it varies considerably in size (though generally called "dust" shot), but differs materially from it in shape. It is mostly carried loose in the pocket, even by those who are "no sportsmen," but who feel indescribable pleasure in fingering it, and in listening to its "silvery sound," or what they call the "chink." One of its capital properties is that of being the only kind of shot which does not require straight powder; and as the game killed by it is frequently found guileless of a shot-mark—none

keep so long. Indeed, so magically attractive is this beautiful variety of the projectile, that the known possession of it instantly transforms a sandy-haired fright into an auburn *belle;* and so doatingly fond of it are many, especially elderly gentlemen, that they will not part with half a charging of it during their lives, and, if possible, would take bags of it along with them in their passage across the Styx.

MODES OF CARRYING SHOT.

As the shot may, with propriety, be considered among the *impedimenta* of a shooter, it certainly behoves him to strive to alleviate this portion of his burden, and to render it as easily portable as he can; and that sportsmen have not been idle in their endeavours to effect this, the numerous plans devised for the purpose abundantly testify. I shall, therefore, proceed now to a brief enumeration of these, and to a description of what I conceive to be their respective merits.

PRIMITIVE WAIST SHOT-BAG.

I knew an old sportsman, in Lincolnshire, who always carried his shot loose in his waistcoat pocket; whose hand was his charger, whose eye was his only measure. This is a very dirty, and, therefore, an objectionable plan; although an experienced person may hit the proper quantity with accuracy sufficient for all practical purposes. Passing over the canvass bag and tobacco-pipe bowl of antiquity, we come next to

THE WASH-LEATHER SHOT-BAG,

Or a small, wash-leather, oval-shaped bag, with a cylinder

of tin, or brass, fixed into the neck, or top of it, as a charger, and wrapped round with waxed thread, or silk. Its advantages are,—its extreme lightness; its bedding well down into the pocket; its free delivery of shot of all sizes; and its growing, gradually, less bulky, in proportion to the expenditure of its contents. Its principal disadvantage is, its requiring the use of both hands to fill the charger. Before returning it to the pocket you give the neck a slight twist, to prevent the shot escaping.

This plan answers very well for a leisurely, or philosophic sportsman, who merely saunters out with dog and gun for amusement and good companionship; and, for my own part, I should, at any time, prefer it to the

COMMON SHOT-BELT, WITH COMMON CHARGER,

Which, in my opinion, is a very common concern. I always disliked it; in short, I dislike all shot-belts, and it the most of all. There is, to use the phraseology of Mr. Donald Walker, on another occasion, "a one-sidedness" about them I never could fancy, albeit we have so many characteristic portraits of sportsmen, ornamented with this appendage. In the hands of the unskilful it is a dead-slow, shot-scattering mode of loading, and even the most expert in handling it would be distanced by a brother shot differently accoutred. Besides, belts heat you more in carrying them than other plans which do not cross the shoulder, by reason of their keeping your coat and waistcoat closer to the body. Every person who has travelled "outside," must be aware that the tighter his clothes fit across his breast, the warmer he is; and if a shot-belt be not buckled pretty tightly across the chest, it becomes a dangling encumbrance in walking. All shot-belts should be worn underneath the shooting-jacket, as well for the reason just named, and for the sake of appearance, as be-

cause the strap generally crosses the right (instead of the left) shoulder, and, by being under the jacket, is less in the way of the gun in taking aim. Some shooters, it is true, buckle their double shot-belts loosely round the waist, and contend that *that* is the easiest mode of carrying the shot; but if I wanted to take a man down, I would "shot" him in this way, and would then set him to climb steep hills, where game was scarce, and deep ling abounding: besides, in this horizontal position, the chargers do not fill near so readily as when placed obliquely or perpendicularly. The experienced and veteran author, however, of an "Encyclopædia of Rural Sports," to whose opinion great deference is due, is at issue with me here. "For," says he, "we have worn a double shot-belt for many years; and were we to begin life again, we should, as we now think, never carry shot in any other manner. We commonly used one of the double kind, as it would carry two sizes of shot; but if there be much distance to traverse, and no servant attends, you may take two shot-belts, and cross them, which will greatly lessen the fatigue of carrying it. [This appears to corroborate my assertion, as to the *one-sidedness* of the belt, when carried in the usual way.] Always sling the belt between the jacket and waistcoat; it lessens perspiration, and protects the shot from wet: it also allows a ready access to your shooting-pockets, which should be an under and an upper on each side; at least, such was our own method. Some wear the shot-belt buckled moderately tight round the waist, and, on some occasions, we have done the same, and with less fatigue than by the usual method."

SYKES'S PATENT SHOT-BELT

Is now nearly as well known as the common one—better, in fact, as it may be said to have superseded it: it is almost superfluous to add, that the patent consists in the belt having

a self-charging spring top, so that the charger full of shot may be both taken out and replaced—it may be with one hand only—without the loss of a single pellet. Like Mr. Sykes's powder-flask, it is a clever, though not so sound an invention; and, so long as it continues to act well, is, as a belt, everything, perhaps, that could be desired: but small, spiral springs, at best but ticklish concerns, are not adapted to clumsy fingers; there is, therefore, nothing surprising at their going wrong, when they happen to fall into awkward hands. Most gun-makers keep a stock of spare chargers, of different sizes, on hand, adapted to these shot-belts; so that, in case of losing one, the shooter need not discard his belt. To obviate this, the chargers are sometimes attached to the belt by means of small straps; but this plan is objectionable on many accounts, and especially as you cannot place your gun in so safe a position in the act of loading. One especial advantage which Sykes's charger has over that of the common belt is that, if jerked out by any means—as in the case of your falling, or jumping a ditch—no more than a single charge of shot can be spilled; whereas, under similar circumstances, it not unfrequently happens, that the whole contents of the common belt are ejected, and especially if you do not discover your loss at the time.

Some of these chargers graduate, and are the better for it. When I used these double belts, my plan was to wear them under the waistcoat—the strap crossing the left shoulder, and the two chargers hanging nearly perpendicularly, just below the bottom of the waistcoat. As this plan has a tendency to wear your shirt, the strap might be covered, or padded; but, by it, you will observe, the belt is entirely out of the way, and especially of your waistcoat-pockets; nor does the strap interfere with the right shoulder; moreover, the shot cannot get wet.

SPRING-LEVER SHOT-POUCHES.

I have already expressed my dislike of shot-belts; the fact is, I prefer shot-pouches, which any one may see or purchase in any respectable gunmaker's shop. Some are made of stiff, others of softer leather: and, from the late Mr. Egg, I have had them of tin, covered with leather; these fill the hand the best, and are rather the quickest of all others for loading with; but, at the same time, the most liable to slip out of the pocket, in stooping, going through a hedge, clearing a drain, topping a gate, &c.; they have also the disadvantage of remaining always of the same bulk, and, therefore, of filling the pocket as much when empty as when full, which is not the case with those manufactured of soft leather, as they shrink gradually, in proportion to the expenditure of the shot, and, lying much closer in the pocket, are the less liable to fall out of it.

To all other plans, therefore, for carrying loose shot, I prefer a soft leather hog's-skin shot-pouch, with a case-hardened spring-lever charger, for land, and a brass one for coast-shooting; though the latter answers for both as it cannot rust.

The stiff leather pouches, are liable to crack, especially in the seam, and always remain of the same size; they are also more liable to slip out of the pocket than the soft ones; and, as a minor disadvantage, the shot rattles in them.

Not very long ago, I handled a shot-pouch which I was assured, on good authority, had, for the last eight years, been a regular hack, having been let out by a gunmaker in a large town, to all sorts of rough customers; but, though the leather bore evident marks of being much the worse for wear, the spring (a forged and neatly filed one), was as good as though it had been finished on that day only.

The pouch may be carried in a narrow, deep, waistcoat pocket, near the left breast, though a jacket pocket is very suitable for the purpose, and I prefer small pouches, that contain no more than a pound of shot, to larger ones. Most shooters can command an attendant of some sort, and let him keep aloof with the duplicate ready filled; for nothing is so grass green as for the shooter to overload himself with superfluous ammunition: it is making a toil of a pleasure with a vengeance.

As regards despatch in loading, the spring-lever charger eclipses all others; but it does not always deliver shot larger than No. 3 so quickly as might be wished. The remedy, however, is easy; for if the shot wedge, or stick in the charger, give it a smart shake in the muzzle of the gun, and if that do not release the charge, jerk it back into the pouch, and try again.

When snipe-shot is used, both the cutters should fit the interior of the charger closer than usual, to prevent the escape of shot so small.

When about to replenish your pouch, always first screw out the top, or charger, and then fill the pouch from a tin shot-scoop, made so as to fit nicely into the mouth of the pouch; this is preferable to a funnel, or to any other plan for the purpose.

These pouches usually have a small metallic loop at the bottom, to which a swivel on a light sling, or shoulder-strap, is attached, to prevent the pouch being lost. Many sportsmen prefer this mode of carrying the shot: but, for my own part, give me a small, soft, leather pouch, as above-named, without loop, swivel, or sling.

DIXON'S NEW KNUCKLE SHOT-POUCH

Is, comparatively speaking, a recent invention. Some of these pouches, in addition to *the knuckle*, have a lever charger; and others have a knuckle with the charger on a different principle; the former plan, in my opinion, is the better of the two, and both of them admit of easy graduation; but on the ground of simplicity, as well in itself as in its movement, I still give a decided preference to the spring-lever charger; especially as the latter acts the better with large shot.

STEEL SHOT-CHARGERS.

The first chargers which appeared of this pattern, having been manufactured of steel, the whole family of them usually go under the above denomination, although vast numbers of them are manufactured of other metals—as brass, copper, &c. They are of various shapes and sizes; but those which are rather flat lie more snugly and safely in the pocket, and are, perhaps, better to handle than the round ones. For general service they are by no means recommendable, on account of their weight at all times, and their worse than useless weight when empty; besides the room they occupy, and other inconveniences attached to them, such as when one end is empty—the being often obliged to open both to come at the right one. Nevertheless, they are, occasionally, found useful, and hence no sportsman's gun-room can be deemed complete without a few of them. Those manufactured of brass are the lightest of all, and are the best for use on the coast; but for service inland, those made of iron case-hardened are to be preferred.

A small steel charger, is no bad substitute for a metallic box, for carrying copper caps, primers, &c.: I have also used them in angling, for holding split shot.

WADDING FOR A SHOULDER-GUN.

Some contend that, so long as a separation exists in the barrel betwixt the powder and the shot, the wadding cannot be too thin; whilst the result of all my experimental trials has produced a settled conviction on my mind, that thickness of wadding, in proportion to the size of bore of the gun, is absolutely essential to perfection in shooting. Others there are who, though no advocates for thin wadding on the powder, prefer that which is soft, and who, moreover, argue, that any particular shape given to it, under the idea that such can have any influence on the delivery of the shot, is a mere chimera. I differ with these notions, also. I have no objection to, in fact, prefer a wadding with some degree of elasticity, provided it be thick enough, and of a texture sufficiently close to form a substantial resistance to the blast of the powder. One disadvantage of all thin, or soft wadding, is, that you are unable to grease the edges; besides, soft wadding is apt to choke up the chamber with burnt particles, and, at best, rams into nothing.

That the best velvet cork, cut thick, forms admirable wadding, is no discovery of the last half century; but then, to say nothing of expense, cork is too difficult to cut, as it is so apt to break; it breaks, also, in the barrel, and, at times, gets on fire, and is, therefore, dangerous. Felt is certainly the best for large bores; but, for moderate-sized ones, I have, after a great number of trials, found Purdey's "prepared wadding" very nearly, if not quite, equal to it; and it is cheaper, takes much less room in the pocket, and answers equally well on the shot as on the powder. Of late years this wadding has

been pretty closely copied; though, like most other copies, the original still remains the best.

There is a great deal of cheap rubbish sold, under the name of felt wadding; it is wool, stiffened with glue, or size, which melts with the heat of the barrel, and fouls the gun.

Metallic waddings are the most portable and durable of all, but are too thin to place over the powder, and are not the sort I should like to use in any gun of mine.

All waddings, and especially pasteboard ones, should, at all times, be kept clean, and free from damp.

In punching wadding, a block of wood is generally used, and beech, endwise of the grain, is, perhaps, the best. Lead is considered to blunt the punch more than wood; yet, for my own use, give me a piece of lead, one foot square, and two or three inches thick, perfectly level and smooth on both sides; for, in my opinion, the punch never cuts so even or so sweetly as on a smooth surface of lead. In all cases, a tea-cup, or other such vessel, with sweet oil in it, should be placed near to the puncher, who should dip the punch in after every cutting. A wooden mallet is generally used in punching, but I prefer a heavy iron-headed hammer, with a short handle.

I know not that I can conclude this article better than by publishing the following, from the printed red paper which Purdey pastes on his wadding-boxes, as it will be found very convenient to sportsmen in the country, who may wish to write up to town for this excellent wadding.

"Prepared Wadding, manufactured by J. Purdey, 314½ Oxford Street, London.—No. $\frac{14}{3}$.

"This wadding was introduced into public use in the shooting season of 1827; since that time it has been extensively used, and greatly approved of. This wadding is made of a woollen substance, placed between paper, and is prepared on the edge with an anti-friction compound, which it absorbs; this, on ramming down, cleans and lubricates the inside of the

barrel every time the gun is charged, and effectually prevents the gun leading: it also lessens the friction, and causes the gun to shoot stronger.

"N.B. As guns of a stated calibre vary a little in size, it is found necessary to have three sizes to each, which are distinguished by the following marks; if, for example, it is a gun of 14 calibre of the full size, $\frac{14}{3}$ a middle size, $\frac{14}{2}$ and for a small size, $\frac{14}{1}$. The same marks will answer for other sizes, if the calibre is marked at the top, thus $\frac{14}{2}$ $\frac{15}{3}$ or $\frac{16}{2}$.

"The box containing the wadding, is marked with the size that fits the gun, which mark, if sent by letter, will ensure its being the exact size."

APPARATUS EMPLOYED IN CLEANING DETONATING GUNS.

"Lucidus ordo."

When the shooter is at home, there is no excuse for not having his gunnery apparatus as conveniently arranged as circumstances will allow. Or if he be domiciled, *pro temp.*, in some lonely hole of a cot, in some remote district, where there is better shooting than accommodations, he should still endeavour to have his traps as ready to hand as may be, and among them the necessary requisites for cleaning his gun. Where convenience abounds, and expense is no object, he can, if he think proper, introduce taps attached to water-pipes, for conveying hot and cold water into his gun-room, with fire-place, kettle, pails, or buckets, sink-hole, &c., and have partitioned drawers for tow, linen, and cotton rag; flannel, linen, and wash-leather rubbers; tape and string; washing sponges; screw brass-brushes, jags, and steel worms; oil bottles; spring cramp; turnscrews of all sizes; peg-wrenches; peg-cleaners; breech-wrenches; hard tooth-brushes, &c.:

add to these a rack, or cupboard, for the cleaning rods, suited to barrels of different length and calibre; the whole, or such portions of these, as he may choose to admit into his remarkably neat, small room.

Cleaning-rods in one piece are preferable to jointed ones for use, though not so portable, and those which are turned with a knob at the top are the most handy and useful. A gun certainly may be cleaned by means of a common ash rod of your own manufacture, wrapped with twine, but not quite so conveniently, or so well, as by other means; say, such as the following:—

CLEANING DETONATING GUNS.

1st. Rub off, with a wet cloth, any dirt, blood, or other stains on the gun, and then apply a dry one.

2nd. Clean those parts of the locks and breeches that the detonating powder acts upon, with a wet rag, and the pegs with wet tow, or rag, in the peg cleaner; this should always be done immediately on your return from shooting, whether you intend to finish the cleaning of the gun just then or not: but if the latter only, then the parts wetted should be rubbed quite dry, and be left in oil to prevent rust; indeed, under such circumstances, it is the best to give the whole gun a thin coat of oil both inside and out.

3rd. Draw out ramrod.

4th. In order to release barrels from stock, take a turnscrew, of the proper width, in your right hand, and placing the handle of it firmly against your breast, at the same time compressing stock to barrels with your left hand, advance your fore-finger nearly to the end of the turnscrew, as a fulcrum to enable you to raise the bolt's head; this gives steadiness to the hand, and prevents the end of the turnscrew from

slipping, and cutting the wood of the stock—a very common occurrence, and one which soon makes a new gun look like an old one.

5th. Bring locks to half cock; take out the barrels and place them in a bucket.

6th. Oil the stock and ramrod with best olive oil, and let them lay during the time the barrels are being cleaned.

7th. Take a quart jug and fill the barrels with cold water, or pump or turn the water from a cock into them, and, when it has run out, fill them again about half full; and immediately taking them out of the bucket, and placing one hand over the pegs and the other upon the muzzles, give them a good shaking; turn the water out at the muzzles, and place the barrels upright in a narrow rack, made for the purpose, close to the wall, and near to the fire; and so arranged that the barrels cannot fall down. Wash the bucket quite clean, and pour in cold water to the depth of a few inches. Replace the barrels in the bucket, and, after having wet the sponge, cloth, or tow, attached to the cleaning-rod, introduce and work it well up and down the barrels, until the water spout clean from the pivot holes. Again replace the barrels in the rack, and again, having washed the bucket clean, place the barrels in a few inches depth of hot water, and finish the process with a fresh wash-rod; for nothing is so convenient in cleaning guns as having plenty of rods ready wrapped with rag for both washing and drying with.

8th. The rod having been withdrawn, and the remainder of the water turned out of the muzzles, wipe the outsides of the barrels dry, and set them upright in the rack, muzzles downwards, for a minute or two to drain; after which, rub them out with a fresh rod, with cotton, linen-rag, or flannel, till perfectly dry; it requires three or four pieces to effect

this ;* and in order that the hutts of the breeches may not sustain any injury during this operation, it is best to place them on a hard thick leathern cushion, stuffed with hair, and having a flat wooden bottom, like that of a chair. You may know whether any tow, or other foreign matter, be left in the chamber or the pegs, by the *sound* of the air, which rushes out of the aperture of the peg with a smart and uninterrupted whizzing noise, when "the course is clear." A pretty correct idea may also be formed, by placing the orifice of the peg within a few inches of a feather, a person's cheek, or the flame of a candle, and then forcing the cleaning-rod quickly down the barrel.

Lastly. Introduce the crossed brass brush to take out the lead, work it well up and down for about a foot above the breech, until the lead is completely removed ; turn the muzzles down, and strike them upon a piece of deal, which will shake out the lead; wipe the barrels clean, and oil them lightly inside and out, and pass a piece of oiled cloth or tow through the pipes which receive the ramrod. This operation (with the brass brush) should always be performed whenever the gun has been used, although it may have been shot out of only half a dozen times, as washing alone will not remove the lead; and, if suffered to remain, the next time the gun is fired, fresh coats of lead will adhere to those already in the barrels, and will thus accumulate in a greater quantity, causing the gun to recoil, and lessening the power of its shooting. Guns always lead most in hot weather, or if the powder

* As a last process, for complete security against all damp, if you work the drying-rod up and down the barrel within an inch or two of the bars of a clear fire, the hot air, thus drawn into them, will dry the chambers and screw-joints of the breeches; some put a heated iron plug or piece of a tobacco-pipe into the barrels, allowing it to remain there for thirty or forty seconds.

be foul and bad, it will cause a great deal of leading; the brass brush is the only thing that will remove the lead without injuring the barrels; the brass being softer than iron it cannot possibly scratch the barrels, but on the contrary, it will remove any rust, and, by continual use, will polish them, and keep them in good order. At the same time it must be recollected, that the use of Eley's cartridges, especially when combined with that of the anointed felt wadding, by preventing leading to a considerable extent, almost supersedes the necessity for the wire-brush—in fact, in a measure, their own wire cage is a substitute for it.

The detonating pegs should not be taken out when the barrels are washed, but they can easily be taken out to clear the chamber of the breech of any substance that may accidentally get in. Always return them into the breech with a little oil, observing the letters R and L, which show the breech that each belongs to.

The quickest way of washing barrels, is to take the round brass washing-brush, and to work it well up and down the barrels, until washed clean.

In all cases the cloth on the rod should fit pretty even and tight in the barrel, especially when used for drying out, or for oiling.

There is no occasion to keep rubbing a barrel more than needs require; rifles, especially, are at no time benefited, and have not unfrequently been injured, by it.

"Tow should never be used in cleaning out gun-barrels; the fibres often separate in the operation of working it up and down, and get into the chamber of the breech, where they remain on fire after the first discharge; and, on loading a second time, the powder-flask is blown up, and much mischief has occurred." So says a tract, entitled, "Observations on the proper Management and Cleaning Detonating Guns," pub-

lished by Purdey, some thirteen or fourteen years ago, and to which I acknowledge myself much indebted in the drawing up of this article.

I believe that nineteen out of twenty accidents, of the sort here alluded to, do occur "on loading a *second* time:" if, therefore, the shooter do not use a detached powder measure, it is best, on these occasions, to pour a little powder into the palm of his hand, and to put a portion of this into each barrel of the gun, placed quite perpendicularly, before he applies the pipe of the powder-flask to the muzzle. For some years I adopted this excellent precaution, which, moreover, demands attention but once a day.

The locks need not be taken off every time the gun is cleaned—once a fortnight is sufficient. Apply a little fine oil to the pivots, and to the parts where there is friction, and, with a feather, oil behind the cock. But if the gun have been used on a wet day, the locks should be taken off, to be cleaned and oiled immediately.

A little grease may be put round the edges of the locks, to keep out the wet.

As soon as the barrels are cleaned, the oil on the stock should be wiped off with a clean cloth rubber; and from the cocks, triggers, lock-plates, false breech, &c., all particles of rust or dirt should be removed by means of a penknife, or an eraser. The gun may then be thinly coated over with oil, and (the cocks being let down) may be put away in your lock-up cupboard, or glass case; or, if it be exposed to the dust, should be slipped into a cover; and when about to be used again, the oil should be rubbed off with a linen cloth, the insides of the barrels, at the same time, being rubbed out with the gun-rod, and a tight fit of clean dry rag.

"Something too much of this," methinks I hear the reader exclaim; yet, all the above operations, though tedious

in description, and, mayhap, more so in perusal, need occupy but little time in execution, even if but a single individual have the whole to do by himself; but, with the aid of a second person, and of proper tackle, the performance of the whole will be found perfectly easy.

DIRECTIONS PROPER TO BE OBSERVED BY GENTLEMEN USING DETONATING GUNS.

The following is a copy of the "Directions," drawn up and published by Purdey, in the year 1826, in a small pamphlet with the above title.

"1. Load with the cocks down, which prevents the powder from being forced out of the pegs that receive the copper-caps. When ramming down the shot, observe the distance the end of the brass worm is from the muzzle of the barrel, to prevent overcharging. Always ram down hard.

"2. Prime the last thing; otherwise, in ramming down the wadding, the powder will be driven into the caps, and become so firmly compressed as to destroy their effect.

"3. Should the caps be put on by mistake, prior to loading, force them off with a turnscrew, and replace them with new ones.

"4. Never put the cocks down upon the caps when the gun is loaded, as it compresses and spoils the detonating powder, and is very dangerous; the cocks being liable to be lifted up by catching hold of any substance, and their falling will explode the gun; but if left at half-cock, it cannot possibly happen.

"5. Keep the copper caps dry: if exposed to the fire for a few minutes, when required for use, in damp weather, they will never fail. Take care that no oil or grease gets to them.

"6. The caps made with the purified detonating powder should always be used in preference to those which are made

with fulminating mercury, and called 'Anti-corrosive:' this powder is dangerous, as it inflames with a very slight pressure, and detonates with such extreme violence as frequently to burst the shields of the cocks, and split the pegs, and wears them out in a quarter of the time the other powder does: it is, likewise, very foul, and will not keep. It also injures the inside of the barrels and breeches.

"N. B. From the peculiar construction of detonating locks, they should not be snapped either with or without the copper caps, but in the act of shooting. When the gun is loaded, the flash from the detonating powder never enters the inside of the barrel; but, if snapped upon the caps, when the gun is unloaded, it drives the detonating gas into the barrels, which creates rust; and, if done without the caps, the works are liable to be injured by reason of the cocks meeting no resistance in their fall, as in flint locks.

"The detonating pegs will last a season's hard shooting, but should by no means be used after the holes are worn large by repeated firing, as it will weaken the force of the gun, and damage the locks.

"It is particularly recommended that gentlemen should send their detonating guns to the maker, to be examined and set to rights, before the commencement of the shooting season."

I approve of all the above "Directions," even to the "ram down hard;" and would most earnestly recommend the young shooter to pay particular regard to the caution given in the fourth direction, as many serious accidents have occurred from the neglect of it.

DIRECTIONS FOR TAKING LOCKS TO PIECES, AND PUTTING THEM TOGETHER.

On this subject, also, Mr. Purdey published, in the year

1821; but as, since then, an improvement in the mechanism of the best locks has taken place, as simple as it is effective, which chiefly consists in the scear moving upon a pivot of its own, whereby all the plague of putting in the scear on the old screw plan is completely done away with. My present directions will be confined to the dissection of locks on the improved principle.

Implements necessary for Dissecting and Cleaning Locks.

Spring cramp; small turnscrews, of various sizes; hard tooth-brush; penknife, or eraser.

In cramping springs, never confine them closer than is absolutely necessary, otherwise you will weaken and spoil them.

To Dissect the small Works of a Lock:

(In doing which be careful not to mix the screws.)

1. Let down the cock.
2. Cramp the main-spring sufficiently to remove it.
3. Take off the bridle.
4. Press scear against scear-spring, with the fore finger and thumb of the right or left hand, according as the lock may be a left or a right side one; and having, with the fore finger of the other hand, pushed back the cock as far as it will go, let the scear-spring go back gently, when the pivot of the scear is easily lifted out of the hole, and the scear taken out.
5. Turn out scear-spring screw, and take out the spring.
6. Unscrew and take off the cock.
7. Take out the tumbler.

To put them together again.

1. Put in tumbler, and screw on cock, so as to be down.
2. Put cock rather backwards, and screw on scear-spring.
3. Push cock as far back as it will go; put pivot of scear into its proper hole; and then, taking hold of scear with the

thumb, and of the top of the cock with the fore finger of the right hand, if a right hand lock (and *vice versâ* if a left), compress the spring, and move the cock forwards and down.

4. Push forward the swivel, so that it may not interfere with the screw, and, drawing the cock a little backwards, slip the two holes in the bridle upon the heads of the scear and tumbler pivots, and screw on the bridle.

5. Having let down the cock, and pushed forward the swivel as far as it will go, cramp the main-spring, hook the end of it on the swivel, move it up into its place on the lock-plate, and unscrew the cramp.

OIL FOR GUNS AND GUN-LOCKS.

A THIN coat of olive oil is the best external application for a shoulder-gun; just as genuine neat's-foot oil is the best for a stanchion-gun. But the insides of the locks of all guns—for the purpose of diminishing friction, and preventing, as much as possible, the movable parts from becoming stiff and clogged by the candying or drying of the oil—should have no other sort applied to them except that which is the purest, and which will neither freeze nor become glutinous; and a single drop applied, by means of a fine wire, to every part where there is motion, will be sufficient: this should be repeated when necessary, as the locks go quicker in consequence; and if not taken off, feather them under the cocks. The chronometer oils are the best for this purpose; but no oil whatever will supersede the necessity for frequently cleaning the locks, which, otherwise, are not always secure at half cock.

SHOOTING:—INCLUDING A LIST OF PREMONITORY CAUTIONS IN THE USE OF GUNS.

"Oh! glorious sport, which can at once impart
Health to the veins, and quiet to the heart!"—POPE.

THERE are some wide-awake sportsmen, who, in taking aim, deem it a useless exertion to close an eye, and who, accordingly, are said to keep both eyes open at the time; the sight at the muzzle end is, to them, useless; they never look at it. But I should rather recommend the young shooter, in aiming, to adopt the usual plan; to close his left eye; and with the right, condescending to look at the little sight, to endeavour to bring both to bear, according to circumstances, on or before the object he is desirous to hit. The directing gaze of both eyes of the archer—

"Telum et oculos pariter tetendit,"

may be proper enough; but a bow and arrow, and a gun, are two very different weapons to handle, and to aim with.

The best initiatory lesson, perhaps, that the young shooter can receive, towards the perfect attainment of the art of shooting, as well as being otherwise a beneficial exercise, is, a regular drilling; first with a wooden, and then with a real gun, or fire-lock: this will teach him to handle, carry, load, and fire a gun with facility and safety; or, at all events, will be highly conducive to those ends. Next, having painted a small black spot, or fixed a black wafer, on a white ground, on a wall, door, or iron target, a little above shoulder height, let him stand at about twelve paces distant from it, and rivet his eye on this mark; taking care, in bringing the gun (previously well-fitted) to his shoulder, to lower his head so far—but not

constrainedly—that the eye, the breech, and the sight will at once be on a level; when the sight, with or without a little elevation, will generally be found to cover the spot; at which very moment the trigger should be pulled, when the tyro should preserve an imperturbable serenity, bordering upon stoical apathy. A very small charge of powder only will suffice, or powder, at first, may be wholly dispensed with. The practice should be continued till the little man can bring his gun up to the mark with quickness and precision, and can unflinchingly stand fire, like a breathless statue. He may now commence firing small charges of powder and shot at a whitewashed iron target, at twenty-five paces; and from the pattern thus displayed, may learn to correct errors not only in aiming, but in holding the gun; for some, who are both careful to keep the eye, the breech, and the sight in a line, and who do not flinch from the gun, nevertheless, give it a twist, sideways, in pulling the trigger; whilst others, in aiming, turn the butt inwards or outwards, instead of holding it fair, or perpendicular. Habits like these, at all times injurious, are particularly so in rifle-shooting.

If objection be made to putting the left hand forward, in taking aim, on the score of there being more danger in the event of a barrel bursting, there should be a piece of ebony in front of the trigger-guard, to give steadiness, and the command of a firmer hold to the shoulder; for grasping a stock firmly with both hands is not only essential to good shooting, but offers no impediment to the perfect freedom and easy flexibility of the shooter's movements. Many good sportsmen always hold the gun with the left hand close to the guard, and contend that "all the requisite steadiness in taking aim, and even of motion, in traversing the flight of a bird, can be obtained by thus holding the heaviest piece." This plan may answer with light guns, but with heavy ones how can it?

especially as such are all the better for being rather heavy forward, or top-heavy, as they are otherwise wont to fly up in firing.

As nothing pleases a young shot more than bringing down living objects, so is there nothing better to beguile the tremours of the moment, and ultimately to produce the desired, habitual, sedate, and philosophical coolness, than firing at such. I commenced my own novitiate at *perchers* in a rookery; bagged my *first* shot—ominous presage!—and to this day could point out the very branch of the very tree on which sat that very percher; and I would recommend the young shooter to try his "'prentis han'," at this description of "black game" first. Sparrows,* larks, and, on the coast, gulls, &c., will afford good practice in "the art of shooting flying;" and if the juvenile aspirant at future trigger fame, now and then pop at a rabbit, either sitting or running, it will always be in far more danger than he. True it is "all that hits is hits;" but he must not repine, nor be too much out of humour with himself, when he happens to miss; but should always endeavour to ascertain the cause of his failure, that he may be the better able to prevent its recurrence: and in no other way

* Sparrows, flying in the open fields, are, at all times, good practice; and the following plan, which I extract from a pithy little treatise, entitled "Hints to Young Sportsmen on the Art of Shooting Flying," is capital:—

"Get some live sparrows, or larks, and fix round the neck of each (by making a hole in the centre of the paper, just large enough to admit the head getting through) a circular piece of white paper, about one inch in diameter, which will not only retard their flight, but render them more distinct objects to aim at; let them out singly, from a small box, or a person's hand, when each, as he flies off, will present a distinct and easy shot."

Sparrows and larks are excellent eating withal; whilst swallows and martins afford neither sport nor good practice in shooting, and when shot are useless; besides, they are harmless birds, cling to our dwellings, and, in an ornithological point of view, are highly interesting.

ought a miss ever to be allowed to occupy the shooter's thoughts, or, at any rate, to vex him, or to discompose his temper—than which nothing is more inimical to correct shooting.

There are two monosyllables which all but rifle-shooters ought ever to bear in mind—namely, PULL QUICK; *i. e.*, at the very instant the aim is perfected, or rather, perhaps, is being perfected; for, as some one has quaintly, yet emphatically remarked, "the finger and the eye should always go hand in hand;" instead of the former (as a quainter still hath it), being "a day's march behind the latter"—of all others, the most fertile source of error in shooting!* At the same time, this quick pull of the trigger is never to be effected by means of a jerk of the elbow; but merely by pressure of the finger alone: in rifle-shooting, a contracting touch, or slight squeeze of the *second* joint of the fore finger, is all that is required. Quickness in aiming, however, must not be confounded with quickness of firing; as the ready acquisition of the former, with the requisite correctness, is usually a work of time; the latter is of comparatively easy accomplishment. Let the young shooter be resolutely determined to succeed, and sooner or later he will do so. "Quickness without impetuosity is exactly what is wanting to make an excellent shot:" recollect Judge Bayley's maxim:—"You will never gain time by being in a hurry."

Closing both eyes, or at the least winking, jerking the head

* The proximate cause of failure here, is in the *mind*, in which hope and fear are raised to such a pitch, as to unnerve the shooter, who consequently is void of decision, pulls the trigger too soon, too late, or not at all, and not seldom fires, as it were, in reckless despair, and even without an aim. Byron tells us that—

"Men die as their nerves are;"

it is, perhaps, more certain that they shoot so.

backwards, and dropping the left hand—one, or all of these, at the moment of pulling the trigger, are faults by no means uncommon; to some shooters habitual, and which must ever prove effectual barriers to the acquisition of first-rate excellence in this our "Noble Science."

Johnson, in his life of Ascham,* writes thus of him:—"He

* Although archery does not strictly come within the pale of our present subject, the reader may perhaps be somewhat enlightened, and provoked to risibility, by the following enumeration of the faults of archers, from the pen of the same honest Roger:—

"Faultes in archers do exceed the number of archers, which come with use of shootinge without teachinge. All the discommodityes which ill custome hath graffed in archers can neyther be quickly pulled out, nor yet soone reckoned of one, there be so many. Some shooteth his head forwarde, as though he would byte the mark; another stareth with his eyes, as though they would flye out; another winketh with one eye, and looketh with the other; some make a face with wrything their mouth and countenance so, as though they were doinge you wotte what; another blerith out his tongue, another byteth his lippes; another holdeth his necke awrye. In drawinge, some set such a compasse, as though he would turn about and blesse all the field; another maketh such a wrestling with his gere, as though he were able to shoot no more as long as he live; another draweth softlye to the middes, and by and bye it is gone you cannot know howe; another draweth his shaft bowe at the breast, as though he would shoote at a roving marke, and by and bye he lifteth his arm up pricke-height; another maketh a wrynchinge with his back, as though a man pinched him behinde; another coureth downe, and layeth out his buttockes, as though he should shoote at arrowes; another setteth forward his left legge, and draweth back with heade and shoulders, as though he pulled at a rope, or else were afraid of the marke. Another, I saw, which, at every shote, after the loose, lifted up his right legge so far that he was ever in jeopardy of faulinge; some stampe forward, and some leap backwarde. Now afterwarde, when the shafte is gone, some will geve two or three strydes forwarde, dauncinge and hoppinge after his shafte as long as it flyeth, as though he were a madde man; some, which feare to be too farre gone, runne backwarde, as it were to pull his shafte backe; another runneth forwarde when he feareth to be short, heavinge after his armes, as though he would help his shafte to flye; another wrythes,

has sufficiently vindicated archery as an innocent, salutary, useful, and liberal diversion; and, if his precepts are of no great use, he has only shown, by one example among many, how little intelligence can conduce to dexterity. In every art, practice is much; in arts, manual practice is almost the whole. Precept can, at most, but warn against error; it can never bestow excellence." Bishop Latimer, also, in his sixth sermon preached before the king, speaks thus of archery:— "For men shall never shute well unless they be brought up in it. It is a goodly art, a holesome kynde of exercise, and much commended in physike." I concur in these sentiments of the great leviathan of literature, and of the distinguished prelate, which are nearly as applicable to "shutinge" with the gun as with the bow.

> "For vainly shall perceptive rules impart
> A perfect knowledge of this manly art;
> Practice alone can certain skill produce,
> And theory confirm'd by constant use."

When the young shooter has killed a few sitting and flying shots at other birds, he may repair to the fields in good earnest, with a view to try his hand at game; and he should take along with him, a single attendant, a single stanch old dog, and a single gun; or, if a double, should load and use but one barrel, though, in my opinion, the former is the better plan for a youngster to adopt. The novelty and main difficulty he will now have to encounter, will be, the startling rush, the whirring noise, plaintive screams and confusion, attendant on the sudden and frequently simultaneous springing of the covey; which is certain, especially in his now

or runneth asyde, to pull in his shafte straight; one lifteth up his heele, and so holdeth his foot still so long as his shafte flyeth. Now, imagine an archer that is cleane without all these faults, and I am sure every man would be delighted to see him shoote."

naturally anxious, eager, and heart-palpitating state, to excite a greater or less degree of agitation or nervous tremour in our ardent youngster's frame; during the influence of which, it will be as utterly impossible for him, as it would be for a man labouring under palsy or paralysis, to aim, with even any tolerable degree of precision. This state of flutter and trepidation—when in fact its very opposite, all but frigid indifference, should prevail—*must* be conquered: and the constant practice of actual shooting at game is the *only* remedy—the only means whereby the tyro can acquire the necessary self-possession. There is no need for him to make a toil of a pleasure, by shooting every day and all day long; indeed, nothing can be worse for either a young shooter, a young dog, or, perhaps, any other young animal, than over-exertion. Still, he should let no day pass, save one in seven, without, at the least, handling a gun; for the maxim of the celebrated painter is equally applicable to the shooter—"*nulla dies sine lineâ*;" which the young wag of a fly-fisher would probably translate—"whip the water every day."

When I was at Cambridge, there was an herculean-built youth of Trinity Hall, who, either for the first time in his life, commenced cricket-playing at the University, or, at all events, for a long time, was thought but little of there as a player; but, at length, he took a favourable turn, and became so sure and hard a striker, that his balls were frequently seen *ballooning* over "Parker's Piece." One day, when standing with a friend, viewing these long hits, I asked him what could possess G., that he should so all at once have come out a first-rater? "Oh," replied he, "they say he has, at last, *caught a sight of the ball*." "Indeed," said I, "it's no easy matter just now to catch sight of *his* balls." Well, now, my veteran sporting readers, I would humbly ask, what say you? Is it not thus with the young shooter at first? He sees no birds, not he!

True it is, a numerous covey rises, perhaps just under his nose; but is not a transient hazy glimpse all that he catches of them? Tell him to rivet his eye on *one* bird, and "never to vary it from the very one he has fixed upon,"—good doctrine enough, we trow, but the thing is utterly impossible; for there he stands transfixed with astonishment! How can *he* fix his eye steadfastly on any one? I tell you he has not "caught a sight of *the birds!*" Nay, start not, we beseech ye—for, among our sporting acquaintance, we could name a few, who have expended in the field their own weight in ammunition many times over, who still see through a mist darkly; their view is confused and not concentrated. Yes! much respected veterans of the trigger, painful though it be, we must honestly declare that ye, even ye, long as ye have been a toiling, somehow "hae" not YET (!) *caught a sight of the birds!!!* But we must not ride this part of our subject to death. Let, then, the young shooter first conquer himself (a mighty conquest at all times), and practise in the field, till he can look upon the rising game with the same frigid unconcern with which a parish beadle views a pauper; and then, but not till then, may he hope to "catch a sight of the birds" —a TRUE sight, which will enable him ever after, instantaneously, coolly, and, as it were, instinctively, to single out any bird he pleases—to "stare with steadfastness," and, if he please, "to pull without a wink;" and, in fact, to do almost what he likes with the covey: though, as a good sportsman, he will always select the outer birds; and will never be guilty of flanking or raking a covey, how tempting a chance soever may, at any time, be presented to his view. And until this deliberate coolness, just spoken of, shall have become habitual, young shooters ought never to shoot in company.

To save his credit during his novitiate, it is an excellent plan for the young shooter to take out with him a partridge

in the game-bag, which may readily be obtained, now that game is saleable; and which can be exhibited to any passing friend who may happen to make the usual field interrogatory: "Well, what sport have you had to day?" "Oh! only a *single* bird." I could name an individual, now a very fair shot, who, for some years, adopted this plan with great *éclat;* so much so, indeed, that his game-bag was said to have imbibed the permanent fragrance of high game, from the difficulty experienced in renewing the bird sufficiently often. Nay, indeed, it was said—for whilst a man continues a bad shot, what will ill-natured people not say of him?—that, in these substitutions, he was oftener indebted to a very clever dog he then had, than to his own prowess. Whenever this dog came to a point, his master hastened up, and when well within shot, thus addressed his faithful ally. "Now, Ponto, if thou misses, I'll try!" Whereupon, this most useful animal made his scientific rush in hope of a catch!

As regards the act of taking aim at moving objects, or "the art of shooting flying," it may be remarked, that the portion of the shot which lies nearest to that powder in the barrel, is that which forms the centre of the shots' disk, as you see it depicted on the target after having fired at it; and thus the central pellets are propelled with the strongest force, as those outside the circle are the weakest. Now the shooter, except at short distances, ought always to endeavour so to adjust his aim that, in the spread of the shot, the central pellets may strike the vital parts; he will, therefore, in cross shots, shoot as much before the head as the speed of the bird or animal, and its distance from him, require; and, as this rate of speed, from the state of the wind and other causes, is ever varying, not only in different kinds of game, but in the same kind at different times, the important business of taking aim must be left to his own eye, judgment, and experience, under the

guidance of which he will doubtless sooner become an expert marksman, than by allowing himself to be too much fettered by system, or too servile a follower of any code of rules which might be formally laid down, on this particular subject. It is also essential for the young shooter to bear in mind, that the mode and direction of a bird's flight, as well as the speed at which it is going, are to be taken into the calculation: and here again a similar remark to the foregoing is equally applicable; since different birds vary exceedingly in these respects, as well as the same kind of birds at different times. As general rules, however (which, indeed, common sense will indicate), he must shoot before birds crossing; above birds rising, and especially when rising perpendicularly; below those flying from him down hill, unless flying very low, when he must shoot a little over them; and, on ordinary occasions, he will seldom overshoot his game by aiming full high: but as to shooting point blank, at all times, as some have recommended, it is a principle which carries its own refutation along with it.

Some, who are pretty good shots in general, never shoot at snipes; because, as they say, "they cannot hit them;" others never can hit birds flying in certain directions; the fact (at least where no physical defect exists) is, that neither have been sufficiently accurate observers of the flight of the birds, and have, therefore, not learned to vary their aim accordingly. Some shooters nearly always, others but seldom, kill their game in style, because, the former are good judges of distance, correct marksmen, and quick pullers of the trigger, the latter the contrary. The birds of the former usually die in the air, without being much damaged withal; whilst those of the latter are either blown to atoms, from having been shot at too soon, escape wounded, or occasion more trouble in the retrieving than they are worth; to say nothing of the feather-

strippings, and dental inflictions they experience, in *the long run*, from the faithful Carlo.

"When dogs point, or when game has been marked and expected to spring," says Daniel, "the walk should be with short and easy steps; the body can then be easily turned upon the legs, as if on a pivot, and the range of the bird commanded, even if it should fly quite round the sportsman;" and it may be remarked that this is particularly necessary to be attended to when traversing bog, coast-mud, or other soft land. When thus advancing to fire, the body should be nearly upright, the head easily erect, and the eye fixed on the spot where the birds may be expected to rise, or sometimes a little beyond that. The gun should now be carried with the stock (I prefer it flat) below the right arm; the fore finger of the right hand (supposing the gun to be cocked), should not be curved in front of, but should just lightly feel the side of, the trigger; the back of the right thumb should rest against the breast (just above the pit of the stomach), and the left elbow against the left side; the muzzle should be elevated a little above shoulder height, and, in bringing the gun up to the shoulder, the arms should be thrown pretty well forward. In respect of the footing and attitude of the shooter, at the moment of firing, Ascham's remarks as to the archer's position, when shooting, are equally appropriate. "One foot," says he, "must not stand too far from the other, lest the shooter stoop too much, which is unbecoming; nor yet too near the other, lest he should stand too upright; for so a man shall neither use his strength well, nor yet stand steadfastly. The mean betwixt both must be kept; a thing more pleasant to behold when it is done, than to be taught how it should be done."

In cross-shooting, if a bird fly to the left, step forward with the right foot, and *vice versâ*.

"When two persons shoot together," in order to avoid confusion, unpleasant collision, or, it may be, even danger, "let each man, when a covey rises, select the outer birds on his own side. Let all birds that cross belong exclusively to that shooter for whose side their heads are pointed; and let all single birds that may rise and go away fair for either person, be taken alternately, and left entirely for the two barrels of the shooter to whom they belong." So says Colonel Hawker; nor can better regulations be devised for securing harmony and good sport, and making the most of the game. When the one party, however, has either fired both barrels, or is in the act of loading; there does not appear to be any objection to its being previously understood, that the other shall fire at any late rising, or, as they are sometimes called, "tailing" birds. I know many instances of very good shots who never acquit themselves near so well when shooting in company, as when by themselves, and yet shooting alone always is unsocial, and sometimes bespeaks no small degree of *selfishness;* and, probably, the want of the rigid adoption of some such rules as the above, is the main cause of these mutual failures. Besides, if a man always shoot alone, where can he put himself, in case of being called upon, to make one of a battue party? At the same time, it is a prudent and, indeed, a necessary precaution to know your man before you become his fellow-shooter: for the history of gun-accidents, and of fatal ones too, arising from ignorance, precipitation, or sheer carelessness, if compiled without much industry, would be fully as voluminous as "The Statutes at Large;" and, as for the various "hair-breadth 'scapes," from accidents of a similar kind, to which almost every experienced, and many young shooters can bear testimony—they have been positively innumerable! How many fathers have very nearly shot their only sons—and *vice versâ!* How many second sons have shot their eldest brothers! but that is

not so much to be wondered at. A few years ago, I was very nearly shot in the foot by a friend, a well-known London artist, who, in firing precipitately at a leveret, aimed so well, that the whole contents of the gun ploughed up the ground within some few inches only of the very spot on which I was standing! but those artists are so subject to sudden flights of imagination, and are of such *sanguine* temperament, that their otherwise most agreeable society, is best enjoyed when they leave the gun at home.

And here I will insert a list of cautions in the hope that they may prevent a "Chapter of Accidents."

PREMONITORY MISCELLANEOUS CAUTIONS.

1. Never purchase or shoot with a gun that is not perfectly sound in all its parts, and especially in the inside of the barrels, and in the construction of the locks; and, whether new or second hand, be well assured of its having been manufactured (*bonâ fidê*) by a respectable gunmaker, and not merely got up for sale, with a deceptive exterior, and a pirated name upon it.

2. "Never suffer a gun,* at any time, to be held for a moment, or even carried, so as to be likely to come in the direction of either man or beast."—*Hawker.*

3. Never put your hand or arm upon the muzzle of a gun; nor lean over it.

4. Never blow into the barrel of a gun whether loaded or unloaded.

* A gun should always be considered as loaded; and even if known not to be so, to point it at any living being is, to say the least, to set a dangerous example; besides, as the man in the play observes—"it might still go off of its own head;" and, joking apart, guns previously supposed not to have been loaded, have, notwithstanding, exploded in a most mysterious and unaccountable manner!—*Author.*

A fatal instance of this common but dangerous habit, is recorded by Major Bevan. "It appears says the Major, "that he (a shooting-companion), had snapped at a bird, but the piece hung fire, he took it from his shoulder to examine it, and, as was his custom, blew into the muzzle of his gun. The agitation of the air, ignited the dormant spark, and he received the whole charge in his mouth."—*Thirty Years in India*, vol. ii. p. 261-2.

In an ancient work, entitled "The complete Marksman; or, the Art of Shooting Flying"—a poem by the Hon. Robert Coot—this same caution is given in very definite terms, thus:—"Never blow at the mouth of your piece, after it has missed fire, lest some latent spark discharge it through your head."

5. Never use a gun for any other purpose than the ONE for which it is obviously intended; and especially as a hammer, or mallet, a walking or a bush-beating stick; as a hook to draw the boughs of a thorn or tree towards you; as a staff to "bang dog," to lean upon, or to support yourself; to assist your fat friend up a bank, over or out of a ditch, or as a prop or leaping-pole, to help yourself over hedge or ditch: nor is there any occasion to take flying leaps with it in your hand, however anxious you may be to display your agility.

6. Never take a loaded gun into a house, unless the caps, or primers, be first removed, and the tops of the nipples rubbed with a glove or handkerchief, the gun be kept in your own hands, or immediately placed under lock and key. But the safest plan, of course, is to make the first eight words of this caution a rule absolute.

Guns kept constantly loaded in a bed-chamber, for defence against nocturnal depredators, ought always to be placed under lock and key in the morning; especially where there are children. A very idle and inefficient substitute is sometimes resorted to, *viz.*, that of sticking a card, or a piece of foolscap, between the ramrod and the muzzle, with the cautionary word—LOADED! inscribed upon it. But, if a phial of prussic

acid be left in the way of a child, or of a servant who cannot read, it is no security to write POISON on the label, how conspicuous soever the letters may be!

7. In firing, never rest your gun on a stone wall, or other hard or rugged substance.

8. Never flash off a copper-cap or primer, when a gun is empty, but always have gunpowder in the barrel at the time, with a tight-fitting wadding upon it; and never let the hammer be down upon the unexploded cap, or primer.

9. Never load your double gun in a hurry, lest you should forget to put wadding over the powder or shot; or should put two chargers of either, or both, into one and the same barrel. You may, however, instantly detect the latter blunder, by putting the ramrod down each barrel, and by then measuring with your hand (on edge), or your eye, how much of the rod appears above the muzzle. A shallow ring filed (with a fine-edged file) round the rod, shews at once the proper height of the charge.

10. Whenever a loaded gun has been cocked, but not fired, uncock it with the muzzles up; and if one barrel only have been fired, the other ought to be uncocked immediately, to avoid all danger, and especially that of loading with a barrel cocked.

11. "When uncocking a gun, never remove the thumb from the cock, until after having let it pass down by the half bent, and gently raised it again, the sound of the sear is heard catching the tumbler."—*Daniel.*

12. Never load a gun unless the cocks be down; and (whatever be the mode of ignition) never prime before you have loaded.

13. When loading with loose shot, always place the prepared, or some other stiff-punched wadding (fitting the calibre of the gun nicely) upon it; which will generally keep it

from moving in the barrel, provided you be not guilty of carrying the gun muzzle downwards. And, after having fired one barrel of a double, on reloading that barrel, ram the charge again in the other barrel, whilst you have the ramrod in hand, in order to make all compact.

14. Beware of the muzzle of the gun being kept hanging downwards; when so carried, the shot is apt to force its way from the powder, and thus to create a vacuum in the barrel; in which case, there is danger of the gun bursting if fired with the muzzle at all inclined downwards; to say nothing of the danger (from a casual discharge) of shooting men, horses, or dogs, when the gun is carried in the before-mentioned pendent manner.

15. After having got through a thick covert, or a hedge, always examine whether a branch have accidentally pulled the cock to the full; and, if any one be about to follow you with gun in hand, step aside so as to be clear of the muzzle, or counsel him to carry it through stock foremost:—but *you* will be the safest by always allowing your friend the honour of taking precedence of you on such occasions.

16. "In shooting with a stranger, who perhaps keeps his gun cocked, and the muzzles usually pointed to the left, plead for the right hand station, and urge that you cannot hit a bird flying to the left; with a gamekeeper, take the right hand without ceremony."—*Daniel*

17. "If you should have fired one barrel, and, while in the act of reloading it, other game should be sprung, beware of firing the other barrel, until you have either put the flask in your pocket, or thrown it on the ground."—*Hawker.*

18. Beware of firing too near to the farmer's teams, when the corn is being led in September, lest the horses should take fright, and run away with, and upset the load of corn, with the man on the top of it.

19. Beware of firing through, or near to the corners of, hedge-rows—especially, when immediately continguous to public roads and foot-paths—for fear of shooting a casual passenger, or that shock-headed lad who is "tenting pheasants fra' th' corn," a not uncommon employment for such in *some* parts of England.

20. Beware of firing too near to rick-yards and out-buildings, as, by so doing, you may occasion an awful "flare-up;" which is bad policy, though the premises be insured, and worse if they be not.

21. Beware when and where you fire, at *all* times. Never attempt to display skill, by firing close to the head of either man or beast, whether a companion's, or a favourite pointer's; and, be particularly circumspect, when a number of shooters are spread in various directions, and especially in covert.

22. 'Ware mad-brained shooters, such as beat bushes with their guns, and especially when cocked; who are utterly ignorant of many proper precautions; and who, if they were not so, would not adopt them; for—

"All *their* madness none can know!"

23. Beware of shooting at, or of shooting your dog; for the former is cruel, and the latter brutal: and never allow yourself to be overcome by the turbulent gusts of a fiery temper, because a man, in a passion, is certain to commit himself in some way or other (*ira furor brevis!*) and nothing is more likely to unhinge your nerves, and spoil your shooting for the rest of the day.

24. Beware in what part of a house you keep gunpowder;* where and how you dry it; and what sort of powder-flask you use; and never bring gunpowder near fire or candle.

* See Articles "Gunpowder" and "Powder-flask." Pp. 63, 68.

25. Before getting into, or out of a boat, or vehicle of any sort, with a loaded gun, always take off the copper-caps, or remove the primers.

26. Unless on the sea-coast, or where the coast is clear for several hundreds of yards (as on a sterile and interminable heath), when loading with Eley's cartridges, never put a wadding of any kind upon them, for fear by this means they should "ball."

27. In shooting alone, when you come to a gate that is locked; first, put your gun through the bars, and rest it firmly against the wall, or post, with the muzzles inclining from you, and then get over it. On coming to a wall, especially if rather a high one, and built of loose stones; first, place your gun longitudinally on the top, with the muzzles pointing from you, and then get over the wall, two or three yards from the stock of the gun; so that if the wall give way, as sometimes is the case, the gun may not be injured, or thrown down. Of course, if you have a follower with you, and he be "up" at the time, let him get over first, when you can hand the gun to him.

28. Beware of abusing your constitution by fagging too hard; for *nil violentum est perpetuum* (nothing violent is lasting). In short, beware of all excess: because that—not to invade provinces which belong to other and graver consuls—is ever injurious; whilst universally—"Moderation is the law of enjoyment."*

29. In travelling or tourizing "in whiskey, buggey, gig, dog-cart, curricle, or tandem;" or, it may be, in your new "drag," never, by way of a lark, attempt to spoil the picturesque appearance of the covey, feeding within gun-shot of the road side, by raking them; or be tempted to molest other game; for such is not exactly a gentlemanly mode of

* Knox.

proceeding; nor is it a very safe one, if the keeper on horseback should happen to be overlooking your movements. "Bagmen in buggies, with boxes of buttons in the boot," are sometimes guilty of these tricks; and horses, ere now, have been trained to stand fire; and dogs to retrieve, to make them useful travelling companions; but, when Nimrod gives his truly English and favourite toast—"as we travel through life may we live on the road;" he does not allude to *this* mode of obtaining a livelihood.

30. In case of fresh or salt water, snow, mud, &c., having got into the barrel, never attempt to fire the gun; but, having first removed the caps, or other primers, and let the cocks down, draw the wadding which is on the shot, when, if it appear necessary, the whole charge must be taken out; and, in strict accordance with the above rule (No. 3), the palm of the hand must never be placed over the muzzle with a view to catch and save the shot; and least of all should the butt be inverted and struck against the top of a gate, or room—at all times a most dangerous plan.

31. Beware of "accidents by night in wild-fowl shooting, from random shots and opposite gunners;" especially when the "boxes" I elsewhere recommend for the purpose are not used. Recollect "the Suffolk farmer," mentioned by Scott, who accidentally, and "at one shoot with a shore gun, shot both his father and mother stone dead!" In punt-shooting, and especially at night, beware how you fire your big gun, lest haply you should shoot your best friend whilst enjoying his night thoughts "*solo in littore*"—or your bitterest foe in the shape of a rival gunner. Recollect, too, the horses in Pool Harbour; of which we shall anon make mention.

32. Never put a ramrod down an empty barrel after it has once been fired; for by thus loosening the scales, or feculent

matter, and forcing them into the chamber, the nipple becomes choked up, and hence a misfire.

33. In case of your ramrod head sticking fast in the gun, never attempt to pull it out by force, or allow any one else to aid you in so doing; but, having first removed the cap, or primer, invert the gun, and press the end of the ramrod home upon the charge, when, in all probability, it will be easily extricated, especially if it have been wedged there by means of a stray shot-corn. But, *observe*, this pressure must not be with the hand, but against a tree root, or otherwise.

34. Never drag a gun after you over a fence, especially by the muzzle.

35. In reaching a gun to a companion on the opposite side of a ditch, or drain, having poised it horizontally in both hands, pitch it to him in that position, when he, of course, makes a neat catch of it. But if he can easily reach the butt end, as soon as he has got good hold of it, throw the muzzle up to the perpendicular, of course taking care that it at no time points towards yourself. But never allow your friend to assist you with his gun in crossing ditch or fence.

36. In public pigeon-shooting, a bird sometimes escapes suddenly from the basket, or from the trapper; on such occasions beware of firing precipitately, as bystanders may be in the way.

37. On returning from shooting, if any part of your apparel, and, above all, if your feet* be wet, put on dry clothes, stockings, and shoes forthwith. But, wet or dry, the safest and best plan, on coming home, is to make an immediate and thorough change an invariable rule.

38. When taking refreshment in the field, or on the moors, beware how you place your gun; not as one sometimes

* See Appendix, No. 1.

sees it, with the muzzle pointing directly towards the shooter's own sacred person, or that of his friend.

39. When shooting in covert, especially at rabbits or hares, it sometimes happens that your friend, or a marker, by stooping, or lying down, may enable you to take a shot over him, which otherwise could not have been safely taken. In this case the person crouching ought never to attempt to arise from his bended position until he either have heard the report of both barrels, or the word of command, "Up!" from the shooter himself: otherwise, in case of the gun hanging fire, or of the shooter being about to take a second shot, the rising individual may fall to rise no more. But, remember, as this is a hazardous experiment at best, the safest plan is never to try it, and, least of all, if you do not know your man.

40. Never send any specimens of detonating caps, tubes, &c., when charged with powder, per post, in a loose state, as, in stamping the letters, explosion might take place, and mischief ensue; but, if resolved to run all risks—having first wrapped them in cotton wool—enclose them in layers of best velvet cork, tied round with thread.

41. Persons unpacking grouse, or any other game, in a very high or putrid state, should be careful not to suffer the virus to touch any sore or wound they may have on their hands, or other parts of their persons, as serious consequences have resulted from such contacts.

42. When a summer party are enjoying a marine shooting excursion, and some of them are placed before, and others (as in a coble) behind the sail, the latter should be very careful in what direction they shoot, lest any one of the former should at the same time be popping his head forward on either side the sail. In fact, the greatest possible caution should be observed by the whole party, especially if there be any "sea on." Recollect, if an accident take place in a boat at sea, it

might often prove fatal, where the same would not be attended with a similar disastrous result on land.

Neither let any one deem this or any other of these CAUTIONS as needless, frivolous, or groundless; for there is scarcely any one of them from a neglect of which the most formidable accidents have not occurred; and the fatal consequences which have resulted from a neglect of some of them have been painfully numerous. I should shudder at the relation of no more than the catalogue of serious and fatal gun accidents, from various causes, which have come within the limited sphere of my own immediate knowledge, or ocular testimony; and what are these, compared with the hundreds which take place every year, and the thousands which have taken place?

To prove what even a single small shot-corn may do, we have an instance but too melancholy, where one of a party, who had just been shooting in covert, was missing, but was shortly afterwards found lying in a senseless state; nor could this for some time be accounted for by his mournful companions, till, at last, some one discovered a very small speck of blood just above the eyeball, where the pellet had entered and penetrated the brain. Slight as the injury externally appeared to be, it terminated fatally; and thus was a fine youth, an only child, and the sole heir to immense wealth, prematurely cut off;—a case almost too afflicting to commemorate, further than as it may serve as a salutary warning to other shooters in covert, how guardedly cautious, at all times, they ought to be in observing the proper time and direction in which they may venture to fire with perfect safety.

"Felix quem faciunt aliena pericula cautum!"

There are some who carry their guns cocked nearly always —a practice by no means laudable in any shooter, and in a

young one highly criminal. There are others, on the contrary, in the opposite extreme, who tell you that it is both needless and unsafe to cock the gun before the birds have risen; this, however, is "all my grandmamma." Let the shooter cock his gun when he supposes himself to be nearly within shot of the game the dog is setting, taking care to keep the muzzle well up, and pointing in such direction, that, if he were to stumble, or fall, and the gun were to go off, no ill effects would ensue to any one, or to his dog. When birds have begun to taste the green wheat, and are wild, the shooter had need cock and "make ready" before they rise; for to "present" and "fire" twice, will occupy quite as much time as he will be able to afford; and even with this and all other advantages to boot, of which he can possibly avail himself, if he can then pretty frequently bring down a bird to each barrel at the same rising, his execution is brilliant, and quite as good as it ever ought to be; for there should be some birds left to breed from.

Toward the latter part of the season, and in a wild country, I always prefer hunting with one active stanch dog only, or if more accompany me, I would have all but one taken up, where game was either pretty certain to be found, or was actually known to be; for at such times, how stanch soever in company the dogs may be; the fewer down at a time the better; because the less show and noise. Nay, where a covey has been marked down to a yard, it is sometimes advisable to go up without a dog at all; to take a shot or two, and make a silent signal to your follower to loose the dog when you want him; and though some sportsmen may be disposed to smile at the assertion, I am confident that both the size of a dog, and the style of his ranging and going up to his game, when birds are wild, have often a good deal (more than his colour, though there may be something too in that) to do with his obtaining

shots for his owner. A great big setter who gallops high, lashes his tail about like a lion, and walks upright to his game, will often raise the birds, when a low dog, that gently steals away, and crouches close to the ground, the instant he touches on the scent, will "*have*" them! In my young days I had a pointer bitch invaluable in this, and, indeed, in all other respects; on such occasions she would, on coming upon birds, instantly lie down close in the furrow of the young wheat-lands, until, in "double quick," I had taken a wide circle and had headed them; then, but not till then, she would arise, draw up, and direct me to the very spot: the birds then sprang up between me and the dog, when many a brace did I thus get, which, had I followed the dog up in the ordinary way, would have afforded sport at another opportunity.

Whenever a dog points, the shooter should endeavour to spring the birds so as to secure the fairest shots he can, and especially for the second barrel. From the dog's manner (and this his master should study, as equally good dogs vary in their modes of indicating their approach to game), and the direction of his head, he may generally form a good idea whereabouts the birds are, and will go directly up to them, will head them, or will walk across between the dog and them, according to circumstances; generally facing the wind himself, and, therefore, flushing them against it; which causes them to rise with greater reluctance and difficulty, and, therefore, slower; thus allowing him more time to perceive the probable direction of their flight, and to select his first shot accordingly. The caution observed by the most cognoscent of the gentlemen of the trap, when they have to deal with "a pair of old blues," and have to face the wind blowing across, is to shoot at that bird first which has the wind the most in its favour; because the volume of smoke is blown clear away from, instead of across, the shooter's vision, or into his eyes; by which

means, not only is his sight of the second bird unclouded, but the bird itself, meanwhile, has been "detained," more or less, "by contrary winds." And this plan is also well deserving a place in the memory of the game-shooter.

In still weather, as most shooters can hit a bird flying to the left, better than one crossing to the right, it will generally be found advisable to fire first at the latter, especially if a cross shot to the left be immediately afterwards likely to present itself: but, in nearly all cases where birds are wild, *quickness* (for if you hesitate you are lost) in firing the first barrel is the grand secret in killing double shots in brilliant style; unquestionably, at once the most difficult, interesting, and beautiful feature in all shooting.

But the shooter should not only endeavour to spring the birds in a way the most likely to prove favourable to his getting present shots, but should also strive, by intercepting them, to divert the direction of their flight from covert to 'vantage ground*—such as turnips, small patches of gorse, young plantations, with long dry grass at the bottom, ling, fern on warrens, &c., where he may shortly afterwards have the pleasure of popping at them, again and again, as they get up singly; and not improbably, at last, may be able to give a very satisfactory account of the whole covey.

At the same time when birds are wild, the shooter ought, generally, to spring them as he considers best for the im-

* Although no advocate for a host of mobbing markers, yet when birds are wild, and game is much wanted, I see no harm in making your only attendant useful. You will often find your account in planting him on a gate, or eminence, as a marker; and, when it is more convenient, or advisable, to have him near to you, he may sometimes be placed as an auxiliary to turn the birds in the direction you wish them to go. Various little preconcerted signals, also, should be mutually understood betwixt you, so that you may telegraph to advantage at a distance.

mediate shot, regardless of the course they may afterwards choose to take. For, "one bird in hand," &c. But, as there are exceptions to all rules, so are there cases, even where birds are wild, when actual forbearance from shooting at all, or, in other words, letting the birds go quietly away, will prove the shooter's best policy. Col. Hawker gives a pertinent and decisive illustration in point. But few shooters, however, can be prevailed upon to quit a certainty for the chance of an uncertainty.

I have very often seen shooters fire, when the chance of even hitting, to say nothing of killing, was extremely problematical; but whose alleged excuse was, that "firing at birds makes them lie better:" it is much more certain that it makes them fly farther.

In countries where birds are exceedingly scarce, and such are becoming more and more numerous every season, it is a good plan whenever a single or "odd bird" rises within shot, or even as a long shot, to fire, without waiting for a nearer rise, or for the expected remainder of the covey springing at your feet; because it frequently happens that the wild rising bird is an orphan, and, it may be, the sole survivor of a family of sixteen; and if more be left, you still have your second barrel in reserve. By attending to this rule, I have frequently bagged my brace or two of *oddlings* in a day, where many shooters, on coming home, would have declared they had not had the chance of a single shot. Two halves are equal to a whole, and a brace of birds is no bad morning's work for the latter end of the season, at least in countries where shots, at best, are "few and far between." These odd birds are as generally as erroneously considered old ones; which, after October, is rarely the case.

Beyond all doubt, a wild country is the proper theatre for

the exhibition of real skill in bringing down birds in crack style; and not "preserves," where there is a lazy partridge under every turnip; and where the shooter can have every shot to a wish.

When a man becomes rather stale on his legs, but has yet sufficient of the old leaven of love of sporting about him, still to prefer "seeking in fields for health unbought," to feeing the doctor, or to quacking himself, *he* may be excused for exclaiming—"My kingdom for a horse," because he now really needs and deserves one. In this our happy country, which so justly boasts of her prime cattle, we have horses "adapted," "cut out," or "calculated," for *all* purposes; our racer, hunter, roadster, coacher, &c.; and equally distinct and characteristic as these, our "shooting pony." His name is STUMP; his height from twelve to fourteen hands; he has capital legs and feet, and is as hard as an ass: sometimes he has a nice, lean, small, blood-looking head; occasionally he shews "a bit o' Scotch" in that part (but we don't ride on their heads), yet always has a lively eye. As to his qualifications, they are so well defined by Mr. Scott, that I feel I cannot do better than adopt his enumeration of them, which is as follows—"He stands fire like a gate-post, and is a perfectly safe goer over all kinds of ground, particularly down hill; a good walker and canterer; a hardy and safe-standing leaper; one that shies at nothing; that will follow readily, may be turned adrift, and easily caught again; fully master of the weight he has to carry, and with a good share of that common sense, apprehension, and steadiness about him, which is often to be found in brutes:" and, I may add, is never known to be off his grub.

One of the most characteristic shooting prints extant, is that which constitutes the frontispiece to General Hanger's book on Shooting; where the author himself is represented seated on a mule, with a vacant-looking country lad behind

him, clad in little leathern smalls, with short gaiters to match, and with no *small* beer keg slung at his back.

The net game-bag, attached somehow to the saddle, on one side, and hanging below the belly of the quadruped, is replete with game. Upon the saddle itself (as I have said), and, to all appearance as hard as the knotted oak, sits a tall and spare figure—the General himself; his costume, a long-lapped coat, with long gaiters thickly studded with buttons from top to bottom, with spurs nearly as long in the shank as the pen I am holding, and rowels awfully proportionate. In his right hand he bears a nine pound double-barreled gun, and two tired, heavy-looking dogs, half setter, half pointer (his favourite cross), are to be seen, apparently, "like panting time—toiling after him in vain." Now, if for the mule, unless a very good one (for most of them are *mulish*), we substitute our friend STUMP, a pair of Rayner's saddle game-panniers, one of Purdey's gun slings; and for coat and gaiters, have jacket and trousers, and an improved brace of dogs, perhaps a "MODERN SHOOTER" could not be better equipped for a day's diversion near home. But if the shooting-ground be at a distance, his dogs should, at the very least, be sent forwards over night; though, to have justice done them, they should ride in some vehicle to and from the ground; for, after a dog has had a hard day in the field, and has laid himself down to rest, it is cruel to call him out of the straw, and to make him follow a horse for ten or twelve miles, at the rate of, perhaps, as many miles an hour. I have known unfeeling individuals (a term far too mild for such) thus abuse their dogs, and afterwards boast that "nothing could tire them." Too much road work is bad for pointers, to say nothing of the injuries they are liable to receive from the bites of strange dogs; or of the well-known fact, that, on a strange road, "nothing is more easily lost than a dog." On these accounts, when travelling in a dog-

cart to any distant part, although it be very proper to let the dogs have a run in their turn, by way of exercise, and as a preparatory training, they should always ride through towns. It is best to muzzle all the dogs when in the cart, to prevent their injuring each other, and especially if they be of a quarrelsome sort: at the same time, the muzzle-strap should be slack to allow breathing room; but the muzzles which are composed of wire and leather are far preferable to those made wholly of leather.*

The keeper, or the person who accompanies the dogs on the journey, ought to be provided with a few screw-staples, or screws with loop-holes or rings fixed on the top, and a loose piece of round iron rod, four or five inches long, to fit into these loop-holes, or rings, to turn the screws in; by which means a dog may be chained in any part of a stable or out-house where a post, or other wood sufficiently strong, can be found to hold the screws; for, generally speaking, there is no other hold but the ring in the manger. Dogs may thus be chained apart, and should not be able to reach each other, lest their chains should become entangled. And I may here remark, that whenever dogs have returned home from distant excursions to the moors, or elsewhere, and where they may have slept in many strange kennels, they should, at first, be kept in some dry out-house, and be thoroughly examined and dressed before they be returned to their own clean kennels; for, in strange ones, ten to one they will have got fleas and ticks in abundance, if nothing worse.

I have known even a short trip to the moors, for a couple of days only, entail these numerous advantages, upon two brace of dogs, whose skins, on leaving home, were as clean and

* These may be, and I dare say are, procurable elsewhere; but I know they are to be had in best style at Mr. Winder's, Shude Hill, Manchester.

free from this sort of vermin as the paper on which I am now writing.

"Nec tibi cura canum fuerit postrema!"

As for racing ponies, flags, and numerous mounted markers, these are systems I have never seen practised, nor have I any desire to see them. Modern improvements in guns and shooting, have left the poor birds but an indifferent chance, at best, of escaping, and the sport itself is sufficiently animating, without perverting it from its former sobriety, into a sort of wild-goose chase. Our ancestors looked to the gallant ranging, the attitude on point, the behaviour and the discipline of their dogs; and these, in their eyes, constituted the chief interest and delights of shooting; but now, to slaughter the greatest possible number, in the shortest possible time, often no matter how, forms the principal pleasure of the shooter, and, by not a few, is erroneously deemed the criterion of excellence in shooting.

SHOOTING SHOES AND BOOTS.

"Ut calceus olim
Si pede major erit, subvertet; si minor, uret."
HOR.

FROM this motto it appears that mankind have long since made the ingenious discovery, that if a shoe be too large for the foot it causes one to stumble, and if too small it galls; furthermore, in my opinion, if too heavy it tends to pull a man down. Shoes or boots, with very thick soles, "carry" more than those which are less thick and inelastic, and are themselves much more irksome to carry. Just let the shooter, on his return from a hard day's walk over a heavy country, pop those clumsy inch-thick soled boots of his into the scale, when he will discover what it is that his legs have had to convey, besides his own weight, his gun, and other necessary implements.

Very strong boots or shoes are uncalled for in any country, unless it be a very stony one, and even there they usually wear out the first, in the upper leather, at the toe. I have tried all sorts of wear of this kind, in all sorts of country, and have come to a determination never to have a sole thicker than full half an inch; but that thickness it ought to be. All shoes and boots should be made of well seasoned leather, of the best quality, otherwise they will warp amazingly; the toes should be square always, and the heels by no means too high, for the form of the foot varies not with ever-varying fashion. Shoes should always come up well at the instep, and the strings which fasten them should pass through four holes on

each side. Cobbler's waxed thread forms the strongest and closest tie, and leather the next, but ribbon soon rots. As they are apt to wear first at the toes, in brushing through the ling, they should be what is provincially called "soled proud," or somewhat projecting at the toe. To obviate this, one extensive proprietor of moors has all his men shod over the upper leather, at the toes, with thin sheet copper; but these *copper caps* are not as yet so much in vogue as the others; a light steel plate, at the toe, is also often adopted. As regards nails in the soles, there is the less occasion for them where a man treads fairly, and, therefore, wears out the soles in the centre first. Some wear their shoes so much at the toes, or heels, or both, as to render light steel plates economical, in which case the heads of the nails, or screws, should be countersunk; but, generally speaking, a couple of rows of nails in those parts of the heels, or soles, which wear the soonest, are the most recommendable; and of these, by far the best are what are called "steel sparables."* They are made in Manchester, and probably elsewhere, from broken spindles which have been manufactured of the best steel. Those great, ugly hob-nails are only suited to the soles of rustics, as thick as the sides of bacon they devour. But in shooting on the moors, in particular, sparables all around, and two or three rows of them in the parts which wear the soonest, are indispensable; as by this means you walk more steadily, when treading obliquely on the stems of the dry and slippery ling; but, as these nails are so hard, they are dangerous for walking on flags, especially in frosty weather: there are two or three sizes of them, and those for the heels should, of course, be longer than those for other parts of the sole; but in no case should nails in a sole be too near to each other.

* *Quasi*—sparrows' bills, from the *pointed* resemblance they bear to the beaks of those impudent birds.

All shoes and boots are the better for having been made some months* (about six) before they are wanted; and it is every way advantageous to have, at the least, three or four pairs in constant wear, going out in their regular turn, like Hobson's horses; if, indeed, for no other reason than that of affording time for each pair being dried gradually, as they always ought to be; and not to be scorched or burned—an evil no future oilings or dressings can remedy.

Before any pair of new boots or shoes be taken into regular field service, they should, occasionally, be worn on wet days, over worsted or lambs' wool stockings; after which they should be gradually dried, and greased with curriers' dubbing, or tallow and neats foot oil, mixed, which is the same compound; the grease is first put on with an oil brush, and is then rubbed in before a good fire with that best of all hones and rubbers—the human hand. This moulds them to the foot, and makes them fit easy. After having been many times thus oiled they may be occasionally dressed with any of the usual preservative mixtures, in which wax and resin are components; but, as the latter has a tendency to harden the leather, it should not be applied too frequently. Whenever the state of the country admits of it, strong shoes are, beyond all comparison, lighter, cooler, and pleasanter wear than boots of any kind. There are drab cloth boots for shooting, made either waterproof or not, which button at the sides instead of lacing up the centre; these, like shoes, are easy and pleasant wear in

* The best time of the year for getting boots and shoes made is in April and May. In frosty weather there must be more grease added to the pitch and resin of which cobbler's wax is composed; and, in consequence, the stitches in the seams are apt to give way, and thus to admit wet. Besides, if made in the spring, the shoes are just ready seasoned for the twelfth. The Knights of St. Crispin know the above to be fact better than I do; but it is not likely that they would divulge the matter to their customers, and, least of all, to their sporting customers.

dry or frosty weather, and wherever it is good walking, and are far less trouble to put on and take off than boots which lace, especially half boots, which, however, in travelling over wet and tenacious soils, are a *sine quâ non*. Many sportsmen prefer quarter boots, with six holes on each side, for general wear; they are cooler to the feet than half boots, and are less troublesome to put on and take off, but are not so ready for action as shoes. A button hook, which will not cut the strings, is a useful auxiliary in lacing and unlacing boots.

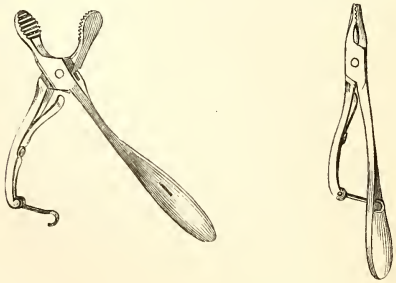
There are three modes of pointing the laces to cause them to pass the more readily through the holes; namely, charring them in the flame of a candle, fastening pieces of well-tempered copper wire on to them, or tin tags; but there is nothing like "the tin," and those round leather laces which are made by machinery. In putting the boots on, they should be pulled up behind with a pair of pincers, as delineated in the cut, p. 138. The best mode of fastening the lace at the bottom, is to have the knot outside, else it is liable to hurt the instep in walking; and the best mode of fastening it on the top, is to have a short leather lace (say five or six inches long) fixed by means of a knot in the top hole, opposite to that through which the long lace passes the last, and then to tie both ends together.

On his return from his morning's diversion, the shooter should either wash the dirt off his boots with a mop, or besom, or they should be immediately scraped clean with the back of a steel knife, or, what is better, with the edge of one made of hard wood; and after having been rubbed clean with a moist, coarse cloth, should be placed in a dry room; but by no means near to a fire.

Some shooters rub tallow on their heels and on the joints of their great toes, which supples the tread, and prevents that blistering sometimes attendant upon a hard day's shooting on the moors. The plan is excellent, particularly in hot weather,

and if the boots be new; but soft soap so applied, or as I use it, outside the stocking, is preferable to tallow.

Old boots and shoes, like old dogs, are of far more immediate value to the shooter (or to any one else, indeed) than new ones, as they fit easy and are seasoned to their work. The grand error in the management of boots and shoes, is, that the wearer looks but too seldom, if ever, upon the soles: hence he is apt to trust all to the servant or shoe-black, who "stands to no repairs," and is not improbably in fee with Tom the cobbler, who, betwixt them, take care to make a job of "Mester," who, accordingly, is first apprized of the forlorn state of his clogs, by the discovery of his great toe protruding between sole and upper leather of one shoe, and a ripper in the welt of the other! They come back after having undergone a thorough repair at the hands of *Sutor*, who has forgotten to give them "hemp enough," or, may be, has treated them with a little of "the cobbler's heel ball." Look, therefore, regularly and constantly to the soles of your shoes, and get them repaired by a good, honest hand before they be too far worn. Thus will they last as long again, and thus will you be always comfortably and well shod.



SHOOTING HABILIMENTS.

Except during sultry weather, in August or September, when the shooter, for ease and comfort, can scarcely go too lightly clad—nay, some then shoot in a waistcoat only, with long sleeves buttoning at the wrist, *vicé* jacket discarded—in this our changeable climate the most suitable garb, at all times, is one which combines ease and freedom of action, with tolerable protection from the weather; but anything heavy about you, in the shape of "togs," except as in wild-fowl or rabbit-shooting, where you intend remaining stationary for some time, or, perhaps, to do a little bit of crawling, is odious in the extreme. It is far better for the shooter's follower to carry, among the *impedimenta*, a light waterproof cloak for his master, than for the latter to overburthen himself with a thick clumsy dress, under the idea of being proof against all weathers. I should never lay much stress upon the colour of shooting habiliments, except it were heath colour for the moors, when grouse were wild—drab, for wild-fowl shooting, or a garb harmonizing with the surrounding scenery where rabbits feed. For thick covert, or for an enclosed country, with strong fences, I should prefer fustian to anything else, being not only good as shooting clothing, but the best of all articles for standing "tear," if not wear; but for the moors, or for a champaign country (except in hot weather), I should, on choice, prefer a shooting-jacket of cloth; say of a brownish hue, with velvet collar to match; nor would I care how fine the cloth was, because I know that such combines lightness with warmth, wears admirably well, and even after it has acquired mellow tints from age, scarcely ever looks shabby, or, what is far worse, "shabby-genteel," to the very last.

If you have a hare pocket, it should, by all means, be a detached one; the best is one of oil-skin. The waistcoat is, generally, best made of the same material as the coat; but a drab-coloured, a plaid, or a Woodstock-leather waistcoat, suits a jacket of any colour. Two tiers of side-pockets, I should say, were invariably sufficient. In respect of gaiters, or "leggins," drab cloth, with metal or pearl buttons, four holes drilled, and "warranted not to cut," as the Brums say, are preferable to leather ones, wherever there is a chance of getting wet, as the latter then turn cold to the legs; but, otherwise, "there's nothing like leather:" and buckskin, tanned,* I have always found the pleasantest and most serviceable wear. Sometimes I have encased my legs in long, light, calf-leather boots, coming up considerably above the knees, with side-straps attached to the tops—the turn-out exposing you less to briars and thorns than to the sagacious smiles and piquant remarks of your brethren of the *battûe*.

A grey, light beaver is neater and better than a wagoner's felt hat—the latter fitting too close to the head, and not admitting so readily of ventilation;† but caps, of materials suitable to the state of the weather, are even preferable to hats for all kinds of shooting.

I do not know that I can conclude this article better than by presenting the reader with the following extract from Blaine's "Thesaurus:"—"If you are on the wrong side of forty," says he, "let the weather be what it may, wear both flannel waistcoat and flannel drawers. The flannel may be as

* Purchase a few prime bucks' skins of some park-keeper—whose perquisite they usually are—and send them to the tan-yard.

† Take a small wadding punch, and, having broken off one-half of the circumference to the depth of one-sixteenth of an inch, punch a semi-circular hole through the side of the hat, a little below the crown; the valve thus formed can be opened or closed at pleasure with the finger.

fine as you choose, but, by all means, wear it; and be assured, it will at once keep you cool, by being a non-conductor of heat, and save you from cold by absorbing perspiration."—A doctrine alike judicious, salutary, and comfortable.

MODES OF CARRYING DEAD GAME.

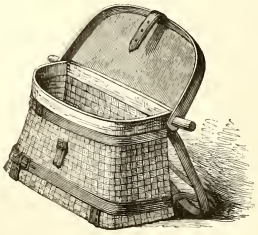
When a young shooter, I carried all my ammunition and all the game I shot, and many shooters still do the same; but it's a monstrous green habit for all that—though, to some ears, it may sound "werry" sporting-like, to carry all one's own ammunition, and all one kills in one's own fragrant hare pocket, and thus make a little donkey of one's own dear self. A shooter should always have an attendant of some sort—I do not mean to say close at his heels, but within signal distance—and let *him* carry the pannier.

I shall pass over all game-bags, because they are common enough—though, of late years, much improved in both make and style—and because, in my opinion, there are no contrivances for conveying game like panniers, when properly made; and of these the best I have ever seen is that fitted up and sold by Mr. Rayner, saddler, No. 19, Market-place, Manchester; it buckles, and, when required, locks; is extremely neat and characteristic (as the cut, p. 142, evinces), roomy, airy, yet as waterproof as need be, and as light and portable as it can be made, consistent with the strength required for the purpose; and the thin slips of withy, of which the pannier, all but the lid, is constructed, being "kyanized," must render it, with common care, very durable. They are, of course, carried knap-sack fashion. Each pannier holds ten brace of grouse

when carelessly put in, and the birds are found to keep better in this state than when either closely packed, *secundum artem*, or when suspended by the neck in running nooses of tape, or whip-cord. They have not been long out, and are, as yet, but partially known; a friend of mine has used them from the first, and has improved upon them, so that now he considers them perfect; and Rayner makes all of them on this latest improved plan.

There are game-bags on the principle of saddle-bags, which sit easy on the horse, with plenty of room and air for the game, and having also convenience for carrying a supply of grub, ammunition, and even the gun; but I prefer swinging the latter across the shoulder in a leathern case, shaped like the gun itself, and fastened by means of a Bramah's lock. I have had excellent game saddle-bags of the above description from a saddler at Grantham, in Lincolnshire, whose name I now forget; and they are also made in London by Mr. Strachan, saddler, New Bond-street, and are, at times, extremely useful.

Since writing the above, I have learned that Rayner's panniers, also, on either the usual, or a larger scale, are perfectly applicable to the saddle.



DOGS USED FOR THE PURPOSES OF SHOOTING.

"Gaudet equis canibusque."

The opinions of sportsmen vary as to the number of dogs to be used in the field, though a brace are the most frequently taken out. As far as the killing of game is concerned, there are times, and those not of rare occurrence, when the shooter will be more successful with one good and steady dog, than with more, however excellent they may be; and where game is plentiful, a dog of this description will find enough to afford sport for any reasonable man: but, in general, a brace of such dogs, accustomed to hunt together, and like a pair of cunning old spinster whist-players, knowing each others play, and devoid of jealousy, will obtain more shots for their owner than either would be able to do single-handed. Three such dogs will prove of still greater service, especially, where there is much heavy work, as in ranging high ling, or turnips, and where game is scarce. But unless they be perfectly steady, a brace of dogs are preferable to more. And it may truly be said, that, for one brace of dogs that are perfectly steady, one hundred of those declared to be so, and by many—for want of knowing better—considered to be so, are very, very far short of perfection. The fact is, most shooters are content with a limited perfection in their dogs; and again, so exceedingly scarce are dogs of pure breed—for it is not every high-bred dog that is a pure-bred dog—and superior training, that many who are fully persuaded within themselves, that "the best dog in England" sleeps on their own premises, in reality, never so much as even saw a properly, so called, high-trained,

and thorough-bred dog in their lives. The general preference, therefore, of a brace to a leash of dogs, is founded in wisdom. Yet many sportsmen prefer, and always hunt, a leash; and where the dogs are very steady, I approve their taste; there is then more life, variety, dash, and display of attitude in the field, and the whole scene is more animating and sportsman-like. But if the dogs be not in perfect command, or if there be more than three down at once, the shooter's attention is distracted, and the charm of the whole thing is destroyed. Some, however, agree with Mr. Lascelles, that (on the moors at least), "provided every dog be tolerably steady, you can scarcely in reason hunt too many together." Where more than three dogs are down at a time, there should either be two shooters, or a keeper to hunt them. Many years ago, Sir John Shelley, who has long been noted for his celebrated breed of dogs, hunted two brace at once, which were in the highest possible state of finished discipline. At the report of the gun the whole four dropped instantaneously, as though they had been shot; and when two brace of birds, in a turnip-field, were brought to the ground, each of these accomplished and symmetrically formed animals was called by name, and was told to "bring that bird," the one lying the nearest to him; when each, in his turn, retrieved his proper bird, brought it to the hand of his master, and then laid him down, until all received the signal to rise.

There may be something formal, but there is, at the same time, something remarkably pleasing in that sort of sight. Contrast this beautiful state of subordination, and these beautiful animals, with the unruly propensities, and "shocking bad" behaviour, of the ill-bred, ugly, chasing, barking, blinking brutes, which are but too often seen at the heels of many a fine young "MODERN SHOOTER!" Indeed, the art of real good dog-breaking appears to be one in which we moderns

have retrograded. I have, however, seen Mr. Odlin, game-keeper to —— Turner, Esq., of Panton, in Lincolnshire, and one of the best dog-breakers in Great Britain, hunt five pointers at once, evidently in a state of complete subjection to the breaker's will. Mr. Brailsford, too, keeper to the Earl of Chesterfield, in Nottinghamshire, is a very superior artist in the nice science of reducing dogs to a perfect state of discipline in the shooting-field; and if there were more public encouragement—as I shall presently attempt to show—given to keepers who are respectable dog-breakers, and fully masters of this onerous task, we should soon have more Odlins and Brailsfords than we have; and then, perhaps, a brace of good dogs might be procured without your being compelled, as is, at present, generally the case, to spend half as much as they afterwards cost you, before you can find them.

The grand cause of the continued superabundance of ill-bred dogs, and the difficulty of procuring good-bred and first-rate ones, is the want—as far I know, the *entire* want—of *the establishment of societies professedly for the purpose of promoting improvement in the breed and training of pointers and setters!* From a pig to a race-horse, from a gooseberry to a pine-apple, everything in this country meets with encouragement, and is allowed to compete for prizes at public exhibitions: and, universally, competition is the parent of excellence. Those little, watery-eyed spaniels, too, are marvellously patronized; but for the elegant pointer, and deep-flued setter, him of the wavy, silky coat, no arena is open—not a *sous* is proposed. The former, in London, propagates his Lilliputian species at a price; and we have stallion greyhounds all over England, and some in Scotland; but a first-rate public stallion, pointer, or setter, I never yet heard of.

Some sportsmen prefer setters, others pointers; and some use first one and then the other, being directed in their choice

by the species of game to be followed, the state of the season and weather, and the sort of country about to be traversed. A few, who "don't care *what* a dog is, so long as he be a good one," hunt both sorts together, just as some people run a pair of carriage-horses, of different shape and colour, regardless of appearance, so long as they match in action. Sure I am, it would pose a professor of Natural History to declare how my friend N.'s Rap is bred; and the man is not born who can boast of an uglier; but then Rap is a good dog, and is, therefore, beloved by his master, despite his hirsute exterior, and Anglo-Russian appearance. For my own part, I like to see blood, bone, and beauty combined in all the works of animated nature. Without the accompaniment of well-bred and well-broken dogs, shooting is not sport, it is mere gun-firing!

The pointer is more generally liked among sportsmen than the setter, on the ground of the increased difficulty in making the latter, or rather, perhaps, of keeping him up to the mark of high discipline when made; for the advocates for the pointer tell you that, with the setter, it is dog-breaking every day, that you have the animal to tutor when you ought to be enjoying sport, and that he becomes perfect only when too old to be good for anything, and which, in general, is but too true. They who prefer the setter will have it that he is more sagacious, a better footer, and a better hunter in wet and cold than the pointer; that, from the soft cushion of hair growing between his toes, he is better defended against stony or frosty ground, and from the wiry lacerations of the heath, so that he can run with impunity where the pointer would soon become foot-sore; and, furthermore, that his rough exterior enables him to rush, with dauntless impetuosity, through brambles and thickets which his sleek and thin-coated rival dare not brave. All, however, admit that, from the same

causes, he is inferior to the pointer in hot weather on the moors, and is then soon knocked up if he cannot find water to wet his feet in, and to lap pretty frequently, be his condition what it may. I am confident that there are pointers that will go any where that a setter will, and which will hunt as well and as long; but, generally speaking, the setter, from his natural advantage in coat, will "rough it" the best. I am also of opinion that some, though comparatively few, first-rate breeds of setters are to be found, equal in all respects to any pointers whatever, but that, for the most part, the breed of pointers in England are far superior to her setters, and particularly in that most useful of all qualities termed, emphatically, *nose*. But, as regards majestic bearing, and picturesque beauty, the setter, when fine, has decidedly the advantage; for he is "the Apollo of dogs."

The handsomest setters I have ever seen were those of Lord Henry Euston, in Norfolk, particularly one named Rector; the black breed of —— Pemberton, Esq., of Trumpington, near Cambridge, and the yellow-pied breed of the Hon. and Rev. William Herbert, in Yorkshire. The black breed of the late John Lockitt, Esq., of Derby, are in high repute. The setters of the late Duke of Gordon fetched extraordinary high prices. The Earl of Plymouth had a breed of fine, rich, cream-coloured setters. I have also seen some very handsome blood-red setters of Irish breed, dogs of vast power and commanding mien.

A few years ago, when shooting on Bowes Moor, I was induced to relinquish my own sport, and to sit for a full hour, on purpose to witness the beautiful style of ranging and behaviour of three noble setters belonging to a Yorkshire gentleman; and was quite as much gratified as though I had been an actor in the scene. The smooth-haired pointer evinces a sleekness and a delicacy which bespeak domesti-

cation and refinement, and a nature suited rather to the cultivated fields of an enclosed country than to the wider and wilder range of the sterile and boundless heath; the rough and hardy setter, on the other hand, seems, by nature, to harmonize best with rugged crag, mountain lake, romantic dell, and the bleak wildness and frowning darkness of moorland scenery, and, in my humble opinion, it is on the moors alone that this generous animal shines in all his glory.

As nothing tends to beguile the fatigue of the shooter, or to keep up the life of a day's sport more than a change of dogs in the field, so is nothing more conducive to the preservation of the dogs themselves. How many dogs from having been overworked are done up in their prime! But, did the young shooter know the *real* value of a good *old* dog, he would never allow him to be abused in the days of his bloom! Because many dogs are worn out at six or seven years of age, a dog is generally considered to be "past his best" when he has seen four or five seasons; but if his constitution be good to start with (and otherwise he is not worth keeping), and he be well taken care of, the tyro may rest assured that his favourite attendant will increase in wisdom and experience, and will be pre-eminently useful long after this period. So long as he continues pretty fresh on his legs, his grey face and venerable appearance are not to be despised, but entitle him the rather to respect and honour. I have hunted dogs, and have found them nearly as serviceable as ever at nine, and have known them well worth keeping at even thirteen years of age.

The best plan in changing dogs is to have a person to meet you with them at an appointed time and place, and to send the dogs you have been working home again immediately, in the same sheets which you strip off the fresh dogs, to be kennelled, groomed, and fed; because, by this

means, the fresh dogs will be quite fresh, whereas, if kept in couples, and following a party the whole morning, they will have been all along more or less on the fret from the report of the guns, &c.; and dogs taken up in couples from work, and not sent home at once, are apt to chill, stiffen, and become stale and jaded; and, in fact, in bad weather are more injured than if they had been kept at work the day through. Where the shooter goes out daily and stays out all day long, three changes of dogs will not be found too many to keep his kennel fresh, and some change there must be, or the appearance of his dogs, however regularly groomed, or nutritiously and bountifully fed, will soon prove him a bad kennel economist. It is absolute ruin to young dogs to keep them out too long a time.

In shooting, it is mutually advantageous for dogs to be well acquainted with each other, and the owner with his dogs; for, though the latter have not often any very strong liking for each other at first, it is apt to improve on acquaintance; but they dearly love their master when once they know him; will serve him faithfully to the last; and not like his beloved fellow creatures, turn their civil tails upon him when most he needs their aid:—

"In him [the dog] alone, fawning is not flattery."*

Previous to the commencement of the shooting season, and especially to going on the moors, all dogs, in order to have justice done to them, should have undergone, at the least, some degree of training; including, of course, physic and exercise; occasionally, bleeding will be found serviceable, especially to old dogs. All experienced sportsmen insist on the great advantage of "giving the dogs the wind;" nor can too much be said in favour of such recommendation. The best dog in the world may pass down the windward side of a

* Goldsmith.

hedge-row, close to game, and be excused for not acknowledging it; but, cast him up the leeward side, and, if there be a head of game in it, he will rarely, if ever, fail to come at once to a decided point. Fortunately for many shooters, a dog of tolerable tact will generally take the wind of his own accord; and partly on this account, and partly from extraordinary and inexplicable sagacity, it is, that some dogs, immediately on entering a field, go up at once, and instinctively, as it were, to their game, without either troubling themselves with superfluous ranging, or the shooter with extra walking: the celebrated pointer, Dash, the property of the late Colonel Thornton, was a dog of this description. "The extraordinary style (says Daniel) of Dash's ranging upon the moors, and his superior manner of finding, and which, when hunting in enclosures for partridges, shewed an instinct almost incredible, by constantly going [or, as Mr. Scott says of him, 'marching direct'] up to the birds, without any previous quartering of the ground, added to his steadiness in backing other dogs, rendered him by far the best pointer that, perhaps, was ever bred." I have both bred and possessed pointers which have evinced a similar degree of sagacity: one of them, Rake, became so cognoscent at last, that he would scarcely hunt a field at all which contained no game; and appeared, "by an instinct almost incredible," to be able, without previous trial, to discriminate those fields which held game from those which did not. This dog—who was a most gallant and lasting ranger, a most extraordinary flying leaper, and remarkably handsome, having all the requisites of a fine pointer—performed many other feats, which shall not be subjected to the reader's credence. Doubtless the Dash aforesaid was a dashing, as he appears also to have been an exceedingly handsome, dog; but there are as good fish in the sea as ever were caught; and I have no doubt Dash has

had his equals, and that they are yet to be found in this our "right little, tight little, island."

As a general rule, however, the author of "Kunopædia" is quite correct when he tells us that "the rarest accomplishment of a dog, and not less valuable than rare, is fine quartering; because there is no one thing which makes such a distinction, in the scale of merit, between one dog and another, as the sagacious expenditure of his powers in hunting to find, or an unmeaning, undirected ramble over a country for the chance of standing at game, when he happens to stumble on it." It is highly essential that young dogs especially should quarter their ground regularly to windward; they should, therefore, always be thrown off right and left up wind, and be made to cross each other independently; otherwise they are certain to adopt ways of their own, of which that very bad and most odious habit of watching and following each other, as well as those of ranging wide, and of "sweeping along the outlines of a hedge, instead of making good their regular fieldings in the first instance," are sure to be among the earliest to be acquired.

Dogs, however well broke by a scientific trainer, when they get into a young shooter's hands, will, for certain, take liberties with him, in a greater or less degree, unless he know how to manage them and to govern himself, and be a strict disciplinarian withal,—from the very first never allowing a fault to pass without notice, reprehension, or punishment, according as it may deserve the one or the other,—and never chastising them in anger, or with too great severity; otherwise, bad faults soon become habitual, and are then reclaimable only even in a young dog, by the exercise of endless trouble, if not of severity; and, as for attempting to reclaim an old one, you might as well try to stop an avalanche from the Andes, to stem the cataract of Niagara, or to pop an ex-

tinguisher on the crater of Mount Etna! If a shooter be resolved not to be at the trouble—and to one who has no pleasure in so doing, it is extremely irksome—of taking pains to keep his well-broke dogs perfect, he had far better content himself with such second-raters as are usually to be picked up at a small price, ramble after their tails as fast as he can, and, in a measure, let them have their own wicked way entirely—except, perhaps, during frosty weather, when the operation of flogging warms both the shooter and the animals themselves. This plan, after all, seems that which is most commonly adopted, and, by it, undoubtedly a good deal of game may be bagged, but in a way so unsatisfactory that they who shoot after this fashion can only be called slovenly shooters; for small indeed must be their pretensions to the character of true sportsmen.

I know some good shots who dislike what they call "an overbroke dog," by which they do not mean one that has been overawed by excessive correction, but merely one that has been formally instructed, or, in plain terms, high trained. They tell you that if the dog stand still, or come to heel whilst they are loading, that is not only all they require, but all they would desire to see. So, also, if he find what game there may be in the field, they attach no value whatever to methodical quartering. But when we reflect how apt, even under a strict disciplinarian, the best broke dogs are to relax, and slyly to take first little, and then great liberties, the sportsman who looks to his own future interests, and the well being of his dogs, will know better than to complain of their being too precise and formal in their behaviour at first, and will ever after be jealous of permitting the smallest encroachment; will not allow them to stray too near the confines of vice, for fear of endangering their virtue. True it is, when a dog from age, experience, or early natural tact, becomes knowing, he

will often do best when left to himself, as far, at least, as regards finding game the soonest, and with the smallest exertion, but not so as regards obtaining the most fair shots for his master, and that is the beauty of a dog. Young dogs, at all events, should undergo a strict discipline at first, for, do what you will, as they get older they will gradually relax a little, and such is the ardour of young shooters that not one in fifty is sufficiently strict with his dogs, and especially at that very important crisis, the commencement of each ensuing shooting season. If, therefore, they be badly broke to begin with, they bid fair to be ungovernably headstrong when they ought to be of the most value.

In reference to using pointers and setters as retrievers, there are two opinions: some, not suffering their dogs to touch a bird, whilst others will have them fetch and carry both by land and water. A good deal depends upon the breed and disposition of the dogs themselves, as to how far they may be entrusted to undertake the office of porter. Some dogs naturally take but little notice of dead game; some would give it a nip and no more, whilst others would tear it to pieces, and even bolt it before the shooter's face; the former may be taught the trick in question with ease and safety; the latter, perhaps, never; but most are liable to become hard-mouthed with age, unless seasonably corrected. I have known pointers retrieve from the first without instruction, and never afterwards injure a feather; but they were rare instances. I once had a black American setter (who retrieved woodcocks in the United States before he was mine), named General—an animal of extraordinary sagacity and natural acquirements—who, of his own good will, whilst ranging on a public subscription moor, one 13th of August, contrived to pick up and bring me a brace and a half of dead grouse, which had evidently been shot on the preceding day by other sportsmen, as there

had been no rain that day, and the foundlings were drenched in wet. This dog was a perfect Master of Arts, though, like Byron's bear, he never sat for a Fellowship.

If the young shooter commence his career with the best broke dogs—and it is his best plan—he never *can* endure to look at bad ones afterwards. But if, on the other hand, he commence with tolerable dogs, such as one generally sees, he will become reconciled to imperfection, will likely enough—for it's a monstrous contagious vice—turn as great a sloven as the animals themselves, become a sort of any-how-shooter, and, possibly, at last, degenerate into an arrant pot-hunter. Such a one, to be sure, may call himself, and think himself, a sportsman, but, in reality, has no more claim to that title than his erratic dogs; and, moreover, has as much conception of the genuine relish of shooting, in first-rate style, as a clod has of the genuine relish of *real* turtle soup.

Nothing can be more delightful than sporting with good dogs, nor more discouraging and disgusting than having ill-bred or badly trained ones to accompany you; with the former, you get half as many more shots as with the latter, and those often much fairer shots, and are never put out of temper. In short, with the one, shooting is all pleasure; with the other, it is, comparatively, all toil and vexation.

Young dogs should never be hunted with strange ones, however well broken each or the whole may be. Old dogs, such as "cannot be spoilt," or, that you "don't care much about," may be hunted together; and, frequently, as on bad scenting days, where the nature of the country renders it difficult to be ranged, or where game is scarce, with considerable effect.

Of the numerous ills which canine flesh is heir to, none, perhaps, are more common or agreeable to witness, than that of a disposition to run in upon the shot, and break feather when-

ever a bird falls. This amiable propensity always indicates the possession, in an eminent degree, of two properties, at all times highly desirable in a dog—namely, activity, and a real zest for game. It is of the first consequence for the owner of such dog to be an excellent shot, as by killing doublets, and running in nearly as quick as his dog, he may possibly secure one of the dead birds, whilst Ponto is finishing off the other. But, if he have an attendant with him, the latter should, by all means, be armed with a hedge-stake—the thicker the better; and, the instant the dog rushes in, should pursue and belabour him without any regard to mercy. And whenever the shooter undertakes to flagellate a dog himself, it has long been consonant with established and laudable usage, that the louder and more hideously the animal yells, the louder and more lustily must his master scream and bawl; and if, at the same time, he should utter imprecations "loud and deep," it adds much to gentility and distant melody, and affords considerable relief.* The life of a dog is, proverbially, none of the most agreeable to lead; but I would not have been destined to have suffered the awful scorings which somebody's Cato was wont to receive, as his daily allowance for delinquencies, real or imaginary, for the better half of that large county in which his master resides. And as for the energetic ratings, which ever accompanied these unsparing proofs of the love which Cato's master bore for Cato's self, to say nothing of the poor animal's ululations, they were distinctly audible at an almost incredible distance. Fortunately for this hapless representative of the noble Roman—what with over exertion of lungs and arm, and the stiflings of ungovernable rage—his master soon became exhausted and, indeed, almost choked,

* Fuseli, when his wife was *rayther* on the scold, used very good-humouredly to address her thus:—"Sauphy, my loaf, swear a littel, Sauphy; you don't know what relieve it will give you!"

when these, his hoarse, rough, vocal ejaculations, died gradually on the ear, in sinking cadence, like the distant drone of a Highland bagpipe. It is said that there is something so awfully appalling in the howl of a mad dog, that he who once hears it never forgets it more: not less might be said of this our "Tragedy of Cato in *five* Acts!" for what with canine yellings, and the loud and disgusting ebullitions of human execration, mingled in direful discord, the scene, though distant, made an impression on my mind but too powerful ever to be effaced from my recollection. This stupid system of excessive correction is now fortunately and wisely on the decline; for, to say nothing of its cruelty, it invariably frustrates its own purpose. Monarch Reason has at length assumed his sway; and now the system of canine, as of human correction, is based on the equitable principle of punishment proportioned to crime. Vindictive justice is becoming a dead letter.

HINTS AS TO THE BEST MODE OF BREAKING AND PROCURING FIRST-RATE DOGS FOR SHOOTING.

"Adsit
Regula, peccatis quæ pœnas irroget æquas;
Ne scuticâ dignum, horribili sectere flagello."—Hor.

This my motto, quite in keeping with the latter part of the preceding chapter, shews that the heathens were feelingly alive to the humanity and justice of duly proportioning punishment to crime; and upon the exercise of a proper judgment,

in the equitable distribution of rewards and punishments, it may truly be asserted, the whole art of animal training depends. Hence it follows, that command of temper is one of those virtues which is absolutely a *sine quâ non* in a dog-breaker. But as dogs also vary materially, both in temper and ability, it is impossible for the breaker to know how to deal with the animal he is about to train, until he has first ascertained how he is endowed in these respects. It must be quite obvious that a timid dog will at all times require, if any at all, far less coercion than a resolute one; and that a puppy who stands and backs naturally, as some do, at five or six months old, may reasonably be expected to make more rapid progress in his training than one (though of the same litter) who will scarcely range at all, or so much as even acknowledge the scent when he comes upon a haunt; and yet, by patience and perseverance, the latter may, ere long, to use the language of General Hanger, "set a hunting like the very devil," and ultimately become a valuable dog, if not quite as good as the one which evinced this precocity of talent. At the same time, backward dogs do not often turn out the best; yet the exceptions are sufficiently numerous to render it bad policy to be too precipitate in parting with a dog whose make, shape, and constitution are good, and whose breed you know to be pure, yet whose indications of future excellence are late in their development. Hero, the very best and the most sagacious pointer I ever saw, and in the head especially, as well as in some other points, decidedly the handsomest, was actually given away, when *two years* old, as good for nothing, and that, too, by a very keen sportsman. And I have myself, more than once, made good dogs of those which at first were generally considered good for nothing. "It often happens," says Pope, "that those are the best people whose characters have been most injured by slanderers,

as we usually find that to be the sweetest fruit which the birds have been pecking at." And this, it should seem, is also sometimes the case with quadrupeds.

Many commence breaking their dogs when they are very young—in fact, from their very puppyhood; and to this there can be no objection, provided the tenderness of the preceptor's treatment of his pupils be adapted to the tenderness of their age. Punishment may be sometimes necessary; but every dog-breaker should bear in mind the good old Markham's maxim: —"Correction may be better spared than cherishings." As far as my own experience has gone, I would commence early with a water-dog, and particularly so with a Newfoundland puppy, that was likely to become a large and savage animal; such being then impressed with a memorable awe of their master's nod, and Van Amburghian frown, not so easily implanted when, as their growth increases, they begin to feel more of their own power. But as regards pointers and setters, which are of a more docile nature, though it may be well enough to give them very early intimation that they must never expect to be allowed to have a will of their own, yet that such is absolutely necessary to bring a dog into the most complete state of subjection, I deny. The great point, in all cases, is first to engage the affections of the animal by kind treatment, which may be effected in a few days, even though the young dog, and his intended breaker, have never seen each other before. This mutual good understanding having been once established, any dog taken for the first time to task, under a year old, may, by judicious training, be made as perfect as he could have been made by any other means. Besides, if you begin training a dog as a mere puppy, and he shortly afterwards—a case but too common—be cut off in the distemper, it is no small mortification to find all your labour lost.

The ultimate object of all breaking is to bring a dog to

that state of high discipline that he will drop to hand—bird, dog, and gun, at any distance from the shooter, and will never rise until he receive the signal to do so; is perfectly free from chasing; from breaking field or feather, and will retrieve if required; and all this without any need of the whip; but little, if any, of the voice, and a very sparing use of the whistle; for there is nothing like *shooting in silence*. To accomplish all this, constant vigilance, and patient attention, will be required on the breaker's part, be the system he adopts what it may; but all the best breakers with whom I am acquainted use the long cord at first, and, in some instances, where the animal is very refractory, the spiked collar. But unless a dog be exceedingly headstrong,—and if he be, keep him not,—the check-cord alone will be found sufficiently coercive.

As no man ever thinks of giving a good dog away, there are but four methods which occur to me of obtaining such; namely, breeding or procuring young dogs of an excellent strain, and breaking them yourself; purchasing such, ready made, of approved and respectable breakers, or, occasionally, at an auction or a "public roup," as the Scotch have it, when, at the decease of some well-known sportsman, "the whole of his valuable and choice stud of dogs"—some of them not always so very *choice*—are submitted to the hammer, "to be sold positively without reserve;" and, lastly, as a *dernier resort*, application may be made to the common dog-breaker.

As regards the first plan, *if* the amateur have the natural qualities aforesaid, he can never do better than break his own dogs; and if such be his determination, I would strenuously recommend him to purchase a "Treatise on Dog-breaking," by W. Floyd, gamekeeper to Sir John Sebright, a work both cheap and excellent; indeed, I have heard it asserted, though I do not vouch for the veracity of the assertion, that for a

great portion, at least, if not for the whole of the hints contained in this pamphlet, the author was indebted to Sir John himself, who, in breeding and sporting, in all their branches, is well known to possess that profound knowledge which good judgment, keen acumen, and lengthened experience can alone confer.

Then, in regard to the second plan, that of purchasing well-bred dogs, of approved and respectable breakers:—I say "approved and respectable," because I know the breed of such breakers to be exceedingly scarce, and that the word of an ordinary dog-breaker is far more easily broken than his ordinary well-broke dogs:—it is certainly the readiest, the least troublesome, and, in the main, perhaps—at least if the dogs have had the distemper, which you should always ascertain—the most economical plan of becoming well dogged. But for the reason already assigned—the extreme scarcity of dog-trainers of repute—it is highly essential for the shooter to have his name on the list as soon as may be; for if he bespeak a brace of first-rate dogs a year before they are wanted, he will not always find that he has been the first to come, and, therefore, the first to be served; and, in some years, he may consider himself fortunate if he can get served at all. There are mercenary dog-merchants, both in town and country, always able to supply any number of dogs—"first-raters," of course!—which any "gemman" may think fit to order at any time. But an honest dog-trainer of repute, who never recommends or sells any other dogs than those of his own training, knows full well, that, to do justice to them, he cannot undertake to break more than a certain number every season, even though he had, as rarely is the case, much spare kennel room. Men of this description frequently have gentlemen's dogs sent to them from far and near to train, and many of them are keepers to private inviduals, who of course expect a

good stud of dogs to be kept up for their own use; so that the privilege allowed the keeper of breaking a few dogs of his own for sale, cannot extend beyond a limited number. Early application to such men will seldom or never make any material difference in the price of their dogs; for, by the end of the month of March, an experienced breaker has seen sufficient of his young dogs to be able to prognosticate their respective future merits with tolerable accuracy; and for dogs of a certain figure and grade of merit—sell when he may—he can command, and therefore will have, his price. The best plan is to bespeak the dogs early, and to let them remain in the breaker's hands until the month of June, which will allow plenty of time before the 12th of August for the shooter and his dogs to establish a mutual good understanding; indeed, but few first-rate trainers wish to part with their young dogs much sooner; their rule being—"never to put a dog into a gentleman's hands which they cannot honestly recommend." If possible, the shooter should, on the *first* occasion of purchasing dogs, go over and see them hunted by the breaker himself, being careful to observe how he hunts them in every respect; when he uses the whistle, and what variations he makes in the blowing of it; what use he makes of the hand and the voice; and, if any, what are the identical words he uses, for scarcely any two breakers follow the same plan. All this should be *booked* there and then, which will supersede the necessity of a second visit of a similar kind, however many dogs the shooter may afterwards procure, from the same quarter.

From ten to fifteen pounds each may, perhaps, be the average price of a brace of well-broken young dogs; and be sure that they do not follow, but range independently of one another.

As regards purchasing dogs at auctions, you should not

only contrive to view them at leisure, before the day of sale, but should endeavour to ascertain, from some *authentic* source, which really are the best, both as regards their field qualifications and their breeding—inasmuch as the "florid prose" of the auctioneer is wont to mislead.

Sometimes a good dog is to be had of a common dog-breaker, or dog seller; especially as these gentry now and then become possessed of a real good dog rather queerly. But he who has thoughts of dealing with them, will, of course, be mindful of the *caveat emptor!* If, therefore, from a cursory glance, you should take a fancy to one or more of such dog-breaker's stud, you must demand a week's trial, at the least, taking care never to allow *him* to be present on such occasions.* No man ought to purchase a dog, and least of all from characters of this cast, from merely seeing him make a good point or two; for he may, notwithstanding, have some other very bad points about him; and latent faults, like latent talents, do not always develop themselves at once. Hundreds have been deceived by these precipitate purchases, and myself among the rest. Therefore, *experto crede.*

Where "money is no object," and sometimes where it is, there is another, or a fifth good plan, for obtaining a brace of good dogs in a hurry; namely, by attending a large and fashionable subscription moor, on or before the 12th of August, for thither flock crack shooters, with their crack dogs, from every part of England. Yourself and your intelligent friend, or, it may be, your knowing keeper, have each your

* This will give you ample opportunity of testing their merits, as you can try them against a known crack dog, the only sure way of ascertaining the real worth of either a greyhound or a pointer. Of course gunpowder must be burned over them, since dogs, otherwise promising well, have often been known to decamp at the first report of the gun, leaving the astonished shooter the privilege of "accompanying himself" for the rest of the day.

eyes about you, and each a large telescope in a deep coat pocket. Thus provided, by attending the ground, and watching the movements of parties, you may satisfy yourself pretty well upon all points except a dog's age, and that, if necessary, may be ascertained afterwards. Some, who are at a considerable distance from home, will be found ready to sell their dogs when the first two days are over; some go thither on *spec.*, and are, of course, always eager to traffic; some may be tempted by gold, who are at first but little, if at all, disposed to sell; and some "would not take any money" for their favourites.

Dogs possess great tenacity of memory, and seem scarcely ever to forget anything, good or bad, they may once have learned—one strong argument for never allowing them to contract bad habits. As to memory, I will relate a fact. Many years ago I bred a pointer, and broke him nearly according to Floyd's rules; he was as good and as obedient a dog as the most fastidious shooter need wish to have traversed the field with. His size was gigantic; but, somehow, he acquired an unfortunate propensity to bite the lords of creation, and, on that account, I made a handsome present of him to a brother-in-law of mine, a worthy divine, who kept him chained out of doors as a house dog. After he got his new berth, I frequently never set eyes on this animal for months in succession; but whenever I did go that way, and he caught sight of me at a distance, the moment I raised my hand above my head, he dropped in his chain like a shot, which clearly shewed he had not forgotten his training, nor have I any doubt that he also, at the same time, recognised his old master and only breaker. He remained for nearly two years as Cæsar of the place, without being shot over; but upon then being taken out, after an hour or two's ranging, acquitted himself as well as it was possible for a dog to do. Notwithstanding his readiness with

his teeth on some other occasions, he would have footed a winged bird through the thickest covert as well as any setter I ever saw, and would have brought it alive to my hand, without so much as ruffling a feather. He died at five years old, of a first and most virulent attack of the distemper.

BREEDING AND CHOOSING SHOOTING DOGS.

"As a fine nose is the first thing I look to in a pointer, I am always particularly careful that both sire and dam are thus gifted."—Lascelles.

"Defend us from lumber in any shape."—Delme Radcliffe.

If a sportsman make up his mind to supply himself with dogs by purchase, instead of breeding them, there is not that necessity for looking so much to purity of blood in their selection, because if he get a tolerably well-shaped, good, and well-broke dog, at a suitable price, that is, in general, all he wants; but, otherwise, he cannot be too careful in the choice of both sire and dam, especially of the latter. Before he attempts to breed, let him be well convinced that *both* parents have not only excellent field qualifications, and external recommendations of make and shape, but also internal purity of blood. Some ill-bred dogs, it cannot be denied, are very good ones, and a few are quite first-rate; but their progeny is never to be depended upon, seldom approaching mediocrity, and often utterly worthless. The reason is, dogs are apt to *breed back;* and when the majority of their ancestors has been plebeian for many preceding generations, the odds are fearfully against the re-production of anything aristocratic. Dr. Johnson tells us that "there is always a certain scoundrelism about persons of

low birth." This remark of our great metaphysician, by some, perhaps, may be deemed cynically rigid, or uncharitably severe, and not particularly true, when applied to bipeds; but, as regards dogs, there generally is a certain lurking propensity to mischief of some sort, among even the very best of ill-bred ones.

Thorough-bred pointers and setters—each species kept distinct, and with many well-authenticated clear crosses in their respective pedigrees—can alone be depended upon; and though breeding in and in, from parents otherwise unobjectionable, with all that can be adduced in its favour, is far from advisable; it is yet preferable to heterogeneous admixtures. The pointer and setter cross is at no time recommendable, as it vitiates the breed and seldom hits. Suitable make, shape, and qualities, being ever looked to in sire and dam, the only plan to perpetuate the breeding unimpaired, and the best to improve it, is to cross with other breeds of acknowledged high repute; and, generally speaking, the farther you go from home, the less risk will there be of any affinity subsisting between the parents.

The grand object in breeding is to cross judiciously; that is, so as not to perpetuate defects in the future progeny, in either form or quality; but to endeavour to amend those of the intended dam as much as possible, by selecting a sire in whom the opposite properties preponderate. It is by this system, in "breeding in all its branches," that the nearest approaches are made to perfection, both in outward figure and inward qualities. Purity of blood is indispensable; yet form and quality must by no means be overlooked.

Purchasing (known) good dogs is, of course, a more certain mode of obtaining such than breeding; but with a proper attention to the rules just given, a man will succeed far more frequently in breeding than is generally imagined; and, after all,

there *is* something extremely pleasing and satisfactory in breeding one's own, especially if from old favourites we have known, or shot to, for years.

The best time of life for dogs to propagate their species is from four to nine years of age. The objection, so often made, to breeding from old ones, is without validity, as they not unfrequently procreate the best stock; but, when very old, success cannot reasonably be looked for.

The best season of the year for "coupling any sporting dogs, is in January and February, and not later than March."

Six puppies are the greatest number a bitch should bring up, though four are sufficient; and if more be kept, they should be put to a foster nurse, having been first rubbed with her milk; and, if possible, this nurse should be of the same sort as the dam; since both ancient and modern physiologists appear to speak positively to the fact of the properties of the alien being thereby imparted to the offspring, both in the human and the brute creation. "Nature," says a modern medical writer, "commands maternal lactation; for the mind and milk of a stranger affect the mind and body of the infant, and render both dissimilar to those of the parents."

Where it is inconvenient to keep more than a few of the puppies, the sooner the remainder are given away, or are destroyed, the better; and the late Lord Rivers's plan of choosing greyhound puppies, may, perhaps, answer as well in the choice of those of any other sort; namely, to keep those bitches which resemble the sire the most in colour, and *vice versâ*.

"In selecting walks," says Radcliffe, "it is certainly a great point to get puppies out where they will be well fed; but it is of still greater consequence to insure their having liberty." This applies equally to pointer as to hound puppies, which invariably sustain injury from confinement. I have bred

some scores of pointers, but always observed that those throve best which had the most freedom allowed them. As soon as they can see, they should have new milk given them, with a little sugar in it; should be weaned at six weeks or two months old, and, for the fortnight previous to being taken from the dam, should have had very small pieces of parboiled meat twice or thrice a day, but in small portions at a time. These little aids alleviate the mother whilst they forward the puppies in their growth, and enable them the better to combat the privations of weaning, and the attacks of the distemper. Good blood, well brought up from infancy to maturity, can alone justify the expectation of first-rate excellence, be it in a pointer puppy, or a racing colt.

On approaching the kennel where your puppies are kept, preparatory to feeding them, it is a good plan to fire off a pistol, commencing with small charges at first, and gradually coming nearer and nearer, till, at last, you may discharge the pistol over their heads, which they will not only cease to care for, but actually become partial to, knowing it to be the signal for meal times.

Colour does not affect the qualities of a dog, as there are, or have been, equally good dogs of all colours; but it may possibly endanger his own safety, especially on the moors, where a dark coloured dog is often not easily distinguishable from the patch of ling he is standing in, when one of lighter colour would be conspicuous enough. Colour, also, is a matter of consideration to the admirers of the picturesque; some hues harmonizing far better with certain scenery than others, and some suiting all—for instance, a white dog with a black head; but a finely formed dog must look handsome in every attitude, be his colour what it may.

Whenever the shooter wishes to purchase a young unbroke dog, say from ten to twelve or fourteen months old, he should

be of known pure blood, of good shape, temper, substance, and action, and should, at the least, acknowledge game when he comes upon a haunt: but the two symptoms of most felicitous augury in a young dog, are decision, depending upon superior nose, in going straight up to his game, with his head erect, the moment he catches the scent; and his backing another dog instinctively from the first. Again, if when he come to a decided point, he, what is called, "chap his point," and never stir till the birds rise, so much the better; but if he dash in immediately afterwards no matter, as he may soon be cured of that. And this is the best age at which to purchase a dog, because he is ready to be put into the hands of a good breaker, and has not been spoiled by a bad one; and if you can ascertain that he has really had the distemper, he is worth considerably more on that account, for it is a great nuisance to have the trouble of breaking a dog yourself, or of paying another person for doing it, and, after all, to lose him in that dangerous disorder, for which there is no specific cure. As I intimated before, I by no means deny that dogs which do not display these early and marked indications of future excellence, may, ultimately, turn out well, or even first rate; but this is the best sort of stuff to go to work upon; and these are the dogs to be selected from a litter, where the shooter breeds his own, and keeps the whole to choose from. The best temper for a dog to have is the mean betwixt the extremes of the timid and the resolute, in fact, he should be high-couraged without being sulky, vicious, or shrinkingly timid. A sulky dog is not worth a halter, and a very shy one I should always be shy of accepting.

General Hanger says, "I have no idea of shooting to a dog which does not stop at birds the very first day he is taken into the field. I have not had a setter which was broke by force for upwards of twenty years." And, doubtless, there

are breeds of dogs so excellent that setting and backing properly are natural to them, self-broke dogs; and these are certainly the best, if not the only ones, really worth keeping, at least if you make a point of breeding your own. Dogs which bear too close an alliance to "those setters which have no natural point in them," or to the hound or other varieties, are very difficult to break, and when broken, though you certainly may shoot game to them, are, comparatively speaking, not worth having; for unless you at all times keep up the most rigidly strict and painfully exact discipline, their dormant mongrel properties, "bred in the bone," will soon begin to show themselves; and reclaiming bad habits—at all times an Herculean labour—in ill-bred dogs is next to impossible.

One great cause of the scarcity of well-bred, docile, and naturally steady pointers, has been the fashionable rage for speed; to secure which, regardless of more valuable properties, the fastest pointers, setters, and foxhounds have been sought as stallions; whilst the old, naturally stanch, large-headed, fine-nosed breed, to which the true-bred pointer belongs, has been proportionately neglected. The latter are fast enough in any sort of country, are incomparably the best for finding game, and for behaving over it with that steady caution which ensures the sportsman by far the greatest number of fair shots. I do not, however, allude to that heavy, clumsy, dead slow species of dogs which once prevailed, but to the improved sort of a medium size, and of good shape, bred from these, such as the black and white breed of the late Sir Harry Goodrick: and in the frontispiece to this volume, are to be seen three former favourites of my own furnishing, though not the best I ever had, yet, I flatter myself, a tolerably good sample of "the right sort;" at all events the performance of each was good, and that of Rodney (a red and white dog) I

have very seldom, if ever, seen surpassed, either in gallant style of ranging, or in all the other good qualities demanded to form the first-rate dog. But the trio appear to disadvantage, having been taken in the summer when they happened to be so fat.

It is proper to caution the young shooter that many, by no means ill-bred or ordinary-looking dogs, are extremely defective in what General Hanger calls "the most essential part about the animal;" namely, "the feet;" "for (adds he) without a good, firm foot, he can never hunt long. I never look at a dog which has a thin, flat, wide, and spread foot; they are not worth two-pence." The toes should be close to each other, long, wiry-looking, and, if I may so speak, well gathered up, or arched; the balls or soles of the feet should be small, hard, tough, and not too fleshy. The foot altogether, in form, should not be (and, indeed, cannot be) *round* like that of a cat,* but will be somewhat longer in front; at the same time, the foot of a cat is an excellent model, or *beau ideal*, for the shooter to carry in his mind's eye, when scrutinizing that of a dog. A dog may have good feet with not the best of either legs or ankles. Such was the case with a very celebrated Derbyshire greyhound; defects in which many of his otherwise superior stock participated.

More than one half the beauty of shooting, in my opinion, consists in the gallant style of ranging, and in the beautiful attitude of the animals on point. I know full well that a dog may be a very good and handy one, with but small pretensions

* "What we mean by the impossibility of the foot of the greyhound being so contracted, or ball-like, as the foot of the cat, is, that the claws of the cat being retractile, and those of the greyhound not, the cat only can present a complete ball-like foot. Had the phalanges and claws of the greyhound been modelled after the foot of the cat, a firm hold of the ground could not have been taken in progression."—*Blaine's Ency.*, p. 566.

to appearance; but he who is ambitious of shooting in first-rate style, must especially look to symmetry of form in his dogs. "Let them be handsome as pictures." Let each dog be distinguishable* "for his intelligent countenance, his swan-like neck, his fine shoulders, his well connected frame, compact, not short, lengthy rather than otherwise, well-rounded loins, with muscular thighs, and sinewy hocks, with a depth of rib and forehand from his withers to his brisket, and proportionate breadth of chest, standing upon bony legs, quite straight, and firmly planted upon perfect feet and ankles." Many shooters invariably connect the idea of a thorough-bred pointer with a weedy, flat-sided, rat-tailed, shivering, pitiful quadruped, capable only of hunting during sunshine; and certain it is there are many of this description, but this generally arises from their being inferior samples of a good sort. "Blood will tell," but to no great purpose, if shape and substance be wanting. If lumber be, as it is, odious, weediness is even worse.

There is one grand defect, already mentioned, to which young dogs are extremely liable, and which is very annoying to the shooter, as it spoils the appearance of the ranging, and renders one dog worse than useless in the field: the vice I allude to, is, where one constantly follows in the wake of his companion, trusting entirely to him to find all the game, without ever attempting to hunt for himself. This is one reason why I invariably prefer hunting a young dog, from the very first, by himself, and never allowing him to hunt in company until he has had a good deal of game shot over him—the best mode of establishing confidence and independence. I know that many plans have been recommended to cure a dog of this

* "The Noble Science," by Delmé Radcliffe.—See pp. 34, 35; also pp. 20, 22, where valuable remarks will be found, applying to the pointer nearly as well as to the hound.

habit of watching, and particularly that of changing his companion pretty frequently. I have tried these plans much more frequently than successfully. Indeed, I am very sceptical as to thoroughly reclaiming dogs of any inveterately bad habits, and especially where there is not a sufficient abundance of game to allow a pretty frequent repetition of the same lesson on the same day; and even though a dog be, for once, thoroughly reclaimed, how apt is he to return to the error of his ways!

When, therefore, you visit a first-rate trainer, for the purpose of selecting a brace of his young dogs to hunt together, my advice is, choose from those which hunt independently of each other, even though a little inferior in finding game. The watch-dog may be a very fine dog, and you may be told that "he will leave the habit off:" true; but, if ever, how long will it be before he does so?

I have dwelt at considerable length—though I hope not tediously—on the subject of pointers and setters; because I know how essential to good sport it is to adopt proper systems in their choice, breeding, and management; and if I have failed to instruct and interest many of my readers, and it were known to me, I should feel not a little hurt; because I have taken every pains in my power, as far as my ability will allow, to endeavour to do both, and certainly cannot plead want of experience.

As I have never met with any one endowed with a genuine zest for the sport, who did not also relish a well authenticated original anecdote of his favourite and faithful companions in the field, I shall not waste words in apology for the following, introduced by way of conclusion to this important and interesting subject.

I have already made mention of Hero, a celebrated pointer, and shall now proceed to speak of a remarkable and somewhat touching incident respecting him. He was the property of a

brother-in-law of mine, who kept but a brace; and his comrade, named Marquis, was a fine, lengthy, launching, and good working dog; no man ever need wish to possess, and but few, I suspect, ever did possess, a better or a finer looking brace than they were. We all know that a good dinner is a topping climax to a good day's shooting; and after having enjoyed our "frugal repast," we naturally turn to the animals themselves, which have so largely contributed to the diversion and pleasure of the morning. Seated in our elbow-chair, beside the blazing hearth—

"As the light lingers in the western sky"—

we quaff, perhaps, our few glasses of the Falernian: nor need *you*, gentle reader, I am sure, require to be told how much they tend to improve and to mellow the more grateful reminiscences of the morning. Now, in this delectable and enviable mood it was that my good brother-in-law, one fine autumnal evening, sprang from his seat, and rang the bell to inquire for the man who had the charge of his dogs.

"Have the dogs been fed?" quoth he.

"They have not yet come home, sir!" was the reply.

"Not yet come home!—impossible! I tell ye, the last time I saw them, this morning, they were ranging in yonder field only—[pointing at the same time to the window]—and I took it for granted they had made the best of their way to the kennel, as they usually do when I draw near home. Go instantly to *that* field, and endeavour to ascertain what can have detained them!"

Quick as thought, the man hastened to the very spot, where, to his utter astonishment, he discovered both the dogs: one of them stretched out dead on the ground, having broken a blood-vessel, and the other standing over him! Man may—

"Mimic sorrow when the heart's not sad;"

and may "exhaust the pomp of woe;" but here were no hired mutes for empty show:—it was Hero, unseen and alone, lamenting over the dead body of Marquis!

KENNELING AND FEEDING SHOOTING DOGS.

Many assert, that the more you make companions of your dogs the better they will like you, the sooner they will become masters of their business, and the better they will acquit themselves in the field; and hence always allow their own dogs free access, at all times, to the kitchen hearth-stone, at least, if not to that more distinguished and luxurious couch, the parlour hearth-rug. They tell you that a kennel is a prison and a punishment; that it frets a dog, and renders him gloomy and sulky; and that, if he be kept constantly chained up, he turns ferocious. They say, "look to the farmers' pointers and greyhounds, which run at large, lie by the fire-side, and take such scraps of food as chance offers; they are always in good heart and wind."

Now, in all this there is a very great deal of truth; but, like many other plans which are correct in theory, it is not always convenient, agreeable, or expedient in practice; and where this is the case, comfortable quarters should be provided for dogs. All kennels should be built in a dry and airy situation; should be warm, with convenience for ventilation, according to the weather; and roomy in proportion only to the number of dogs kept, for a large kennel is, of course, colder than a small one, and takes more cleaning out; and two or three small, narrow kennels, six or seven feet high inside, and of the shed-roof form, are, on various accounts, far preferable to, and

more convenient and economical than, one large one. The benches, which should not be raised higher than two or three inches from the ground, should be open to let the urine through; the kennels being made narrow, and the benches the same, to correspond with their sides, by being first drawn forward a little, are easily upraised perpendicularly; or, if half raised only, may be kept in that position by means of a rope or chain from the ceiling. This plan, for the convenience of washing out the kennel, renders all the usual hinges and hooks in the wall unnecessary. To enable you to take the benches through the doorway, when you wish to give them a thorough washing (with soft soap and a hard brush), and airing, they are best made in two parts, united by means of two wooden pins passing through staples in the side posts. It is of the utmost possible consequence that cleanliness should pervade every department of the kennels: of course, therefore, they should be bricked, and sloped, and have every proper convenience for thorough drainage, and the maintenance of a sweet atmosphere. "Condition," says Blaine, "cannot be kept up without a scentless lodging; foul coats follow on breathing putrid effluvia; mange succeeds, and the nose then fails to do its office."

In regard to feeding, dogs should be dieted according to their work, appetite, and condition. Each should have a separate measured mess to himself; quarrelsome dogs may be chained whilst eating their food; but, where convenience allows, it is by far the best plan to feed them apart from each other, especially if a person do not stand over them the while. The food should be perfectly cool before the dog has a chance of tasting it, as hot food is injurious at all times, and, when very hot, might prove fatal to a dog of ravenous appetite. At Pool, in Dorsetshire, I was told that "the best way to cure a water-dog of breaking feather, was to give him hot victuals,

or to boil an egg hard, and immediately put it into his mouth, and close his jaws;" this, it was said, "took the skin off the roof of his mouth, and made him tender-mouthed ever after." The extreme cruelty of these plans is rendered only the less excusable by their obvious inefficacy.

The best *old* oatmeal boiled (not merely scalded), and thinned with broth made from horse or cow-flesh, boiled also in a copper, with the addition of a sufficient portion of the solid flesh, I always prefer, and have used as food for pointers and setters during the shooting season; but at other times, and especially in hot weather, broth thickened with a little oatmeal, boiled carrots, potatoes, greens, and, indeed, almost any kind of vegetable, answers better without solid flesh, as the constant excitement of high keep is not advisable when the weather is hot, and the animals' bodily powers are not called into severe exercise: moreover, the vegetable liquid being cooling, detergent, and antiseptic, counteracts the well-known heating qualities of both meal and horse-flesh.

Many contend that flesh of all kinds, and especially horse-flesh, is injurious to the nose or scenting powers of the dog, and hence will not allow their dogs to taste it during the sporting season. How far flesh in a putrid state might have such effect, I will not take upon me to determine; but otherwise, the idea I am confident is chimerical. Dogs have a natural propensity to eat flesh in a highly putrid state; and it is supposed, with some colour of reasoning, are not injured thereby; but they should always be debarred from it for obvious reasons, and especially if they have the run of the house.

Mutton (sheep which die by accident) is admirable food for dogs, as all sporting large farmers admit, and for constant work, I should, on choice, prefer it to any other; but it is

not often attainable in many situations. Biscuits, when neither salt nor fusty, well soaked in broth or water, are very good dog food, and are extremely convenient to take to the moors. Tripe also is good food. But, next to starving a dog outright, the grossest indignity you can offer him in return for a hard day's service, is that abominable condensation of broken glass, rusty nails, and superfluity of the dregs of greasy nastiness, called tallow-crap, or greaves.

If you materially alter the food a dog is accustomed to, be it what it may, his bowels will be affected thereby; but this is of more consequence in the nicer business of training greyhounds for matches, than to a pointer in shooting for mere recreation; though its effects will be discernible in both. Where extraordinary exertions are required, a regular adherence to the same kind of regimen, and that highly nutritive and stimulant, may be, and is, highly necessary; but, for the sober business of every day living, and exercise in an ordinary way, all animals probably are benefited by an occasional change of food, and shooting dogs among the rest.

Where many sporting dogs are kept, the sexes should be kept apart, and fed apart from each other, at all times, to prevent those furious contentions which otherwise are certain to arise, especially at a particular crisis; for with all animals there appears to be the same "causa teterrima belli."

Shooting dogs should be lightly fed early in a morning, have a few pieces of biscuit or oat-cake given them in the field during the day, and be well fed on their return home. Under the old "system of kennel," dogs were fed but once a day; but the *illuminati* of modern days have discovered, that it is not so much the food given, as the mode in which it is adminstered, which tells the tale.

Greyhounds, in training, are now fed thrice a day, at least by the Bests, the Elmhirsts, and the Goodlakes, the more cog-

noscent of the lovers of the leash. The gross weight of food during the day is not greater than of old, but is more beneficially divided, inasmuch as the stomach and bowels are the less distended after each meal.

HOW TO DESTROY FLEAS AND TICKS ON DOGS.

1. Take any quantity of cold water, adding to it small quantities of the oil of vitriol (sulphuric acid), till you can fairly bear it on your tongue; then wash the dog all over with it, taking care that none gets into his eyes. One dressing will be found sufficient. This remedy has the great recommendation of being so clean a one. The dogs should be muzzled so that they can neither lick themselves nor each other with their tongues.

2. Rub the dogs with sweet oil, or with train oil and sulphur mixed, and keep them in a warm kennel without any straw, lest they rub the oil off. Let them remain there for ten or twelve hours, and then wash them clean with soft soap, using also a flannel and brush. Afterwards let them dry themselves before a large hot fire, or, if in summer, give them a run in the sunshine. Repeat the dressing in a few days if required.

N.B. But as ticks are more difficult to be got rid of from the kennels than from the dogs themselves, it is of but little avail destroying them on the latter, without they be also extirpated from the former. For this purpose the above wash (No. 1) will be found sufficient of itself; but in applying it with the brush, not a crevice or a cranny should be missed,

as the ticks creep up the walls in every direction. Scalding the floors, and dashing or syringing the kennel with boiling hot water, is a good plan. Or, having stopped up all ventilation, place some straw, sprinkled with sulphur, in the middle of the floor, and, having set fire to it, close the door for an hour, and thus fumigate the apartment. In short, use every remedy in turn, rather than suffer the continuance of such bad tenants. Then give all the air you can; and when the place is sweet again, having previously pointed all the crevices, if any, with lime plaster, whitewash or paint the interior. Painting the walls and benches is highly recommendable.

In dressing a dog, always take care that the application goes home to the skin, under "each individual hair," as it were. No part ought to escape the unction.

The whole kennel of dogs should be regularly ticked once a fortnight; and "the examiner" ought to be careful to look inside the ears, and under the folds of the ear, between the claws, &c., so as to be sure to miss none, great or small, as they multiply rapidly.

Suffer no strange dog to approach yours, as they convey the infection. And, as elsewhere observed, always dress the dogs on their return from the moors, or strange kennels, before they are permitted to re-enter their own clean ones.

THE SPANIEL.

The term Spaniel, in its most enlarged sense, includes many and almost endless varieties, from the noble dog of St. Bernard's to my lady's dog "Tiney," bred or brandied down to the most prizeable diminutiveness by Spitalfields ingenuity,

and whose price varies from ten to one hundred and fifty pounds. The extreme beauty and affectionate attachment to their owner, which characterize the whole breed, have long since given them palace and parlour precedence over the rest of the canine race. Few bipeds fare half so well as some lap-dogs, who might have gold if they could eat it, and who are denied nothing but Christian burial. These pet degenerates of the fancy tribe, being propagated merely for show, are always "more fit for the carpet than the thicket;" and are wholly unworthy the sportsman's notice; especially as covert shooting, for which spaniels are best adapted, is always fatiguing, and sometimes, when the covert is dense, so laborious as to task the metal of the very best dogs of the sort which can be produced. Hence sportsmen acknowledge but too sorts for shooting in covert; *viz.*, the springer and the cocker. The former is the large sporting or gun spaniel, "too well known to need description;" the latter, chiefly appropriated to cock-shooting, is shorter in the nose, body, and legs, rounder in the head, and altogether much smaller than the former; his ears, legs, and tail, are well feathered, and his hair is more waved and gracefully curled than that of the springer. They vary in colour; though red and white, and black and white, are, perhaps, the most prevailing colours; the rich, glossy, silky coat of the black and black-tan breeds is peculiarly beautiful; in fact, a beautiful cocker is the most engaging of sporting dogs. Would I had a couple of such! "Spaniels for pheasant and cock-shooting cannot be too strong, too short upon the leg, or have too much courage. To be in a perfect state of discipline, they must follow a hare no farther than whilst it is in view; when once put into covert must not quit it to range in the fields, which some slippery ones will do; and must be in their places, twisting round every stub with agility, and possess such fineness of nose that neither woodcock

nor pheasant can escape their search;"* they must also not ramble wide in covert, but keep within gun-shot.

From this demanded union of qualities and qualifications, the young shooter will easily perceive that to procure a perfect team of spaniels is no easy matter, especially as, of all sporting dogs, they are the most difficult to train, being generally high-couraged, head-strong, and greedy of the lash.

As it is full occupation for a keeper to hunt them, the shooter, all eye and ear, is perfectly at liberty to watch the movements of these inquisitive little dogs, to observe their bustling eagerness when questing upon the haunt, and to wait in breathless expectation of that "redoubled chant" which unerringly announces that "the game's afoot," or on the wing, for—

> "No babbling voice the bosom falsely warms,
> Or swells the panting heart with vain alarms,
> Till all at once their choral tongues proclaim,
> The secret refuge of the lurking game."—Pye.

Some sportsmen are so partial to spaniels as to keep no other sort of dog; shooting every description of game over them, as well in the open as in covert; and, certainly, when well-trained, and good of their kind, nothing comes amiss to spaniels, though they are the most "at home" in, and the best suited for, covert. *Height*, it has been justly remarked, has nothing to do with *size;* and this is peculiarly applicable to the spaniel of all other dogs, who ought to stand on short, bony legs, and to be powerfully made all over, with a speaking eye, a large head, and with large, long, pendant ears, though many sportsmen object to very long ears, as exposing the ear-flap to lacerations from thorns and briers, which frequently produce that troublesome disorder—canker. Length of ear, however, adds much to beauty of appearance. When one or

* Daniel.

two spaniels only are used, each should have been taught "to fetch and carry;" but, "in a team, some think but one should do this; otherwise, they will break the game in struggling which shall carry it."

It is a valuable property in a spaniel to hunt the opposite side of a hedge to that on which his master is shooting—so long as he do not get too far ahead, or in advance of him.

Many years ago, I saw a fine team of spaniels, belonging to the Marquis of Exeter; one or two of them were somewhat bandy-legged, but they had a hardy, business-like look about them, and the keeper assured me they were everlasting workers. This same keeper was the man who, a few years before, had been shot in the face by a poacher; he seemed, however, still ardently devoted to his office; and, with a true John Bull zest, asked me, "What's finer exercise than shooting, sir? What gives a man a better appetite for his victuals?" The Duke of Newcastle, Lords Middleton, Chesterfield, and Combermere, Colonel Wilson of Dalham Tower, in Westmoreland, and many other of our nobility and gentry, are in no want of first-rate spaniels; there is also a breed of very powerful liver-coloured dogs of this kind in Kent, highly spoken of by connoisseurs in sporting matters.

However partial to pointers or setters a shooter may be, it is not wisdom to wage eternal war against spaniels; because there are cases where a couple of good, well-broke spaniels, or of little cockers, will be found far more useful than the former —and of all other dogs they are the most ornamental and picturesque—to say nothing of the respite which one kind affords the other, or of that variety which is said to be "always pleasing," and to which shooting does not form an exception. They are also admirable alarmists as house dogs.

THE RETRIEVER,

As his name implies, *re-finds* the dead or wounded game, and brings it to his master, without breaking a single feather, much less daring to make a tooth-hole in it; he must, therefore, have a good nose, a tolerably sized mouth, and strength and aptitude to carry a large hare. In covert his services are of especial importance; and in *battûe* shooting he is a *sine quâ non;* for then a couple of good dogs of this description will, in half the time, recover as many more head of wounded game, as half-a-dozen men would do, and without springing half as much fresh game on the untried ground; to say nothing of those wounded ones which would wholly escape the bipeds. Some would have a retriever, a dog of all work; but, in my opinion, his services ought to be exclusively confined to hunting in and out of covert, in the pursuit of wounded game; and, when found, of course carrying it to his master.

So much for his own importance, and "the duties of his office." And now a word or two on his breeding and training; and, first I would say, that though it be as well for every retriever of game, to recover wild-fowl also, yet, as the dog required for the former purpose is not always the best adapted for the latter, their breeding should not be from the same stock. The game retriever may be of any colour, and of great size, and yet be none the worse; but a wild-fowl retriever, if conspicuous for either, will frequently mar superior sport. The game retriever is variously bred, but the best general cross, probably, is that between a low, large-headed, setter bitch, and a Newfoundlander, especially of the St. John's breed: at the same time excellent retrievers have been the

produce of very singular crosses. I at present know an admirable retriever bred between a Newfoundland dog and a lurcher. Now and then the large Newfoundlander himself will be found capital, both as a retriever and in *finding* game in covert; but, in general, dogs of that species are too big and heavy for thick covert and active ranging. The smaller, black, smoother-haired variety, or St. John's Newfoundlander, which, about Christmas, is sometimes landed at Pool,* in Dorsetshire, is in high repute as a retriever, both on the coast and in covert; but, having been almost exclusively fed on fish at home, the change of food in this country does not agree with them, and they are in consequence peculiarly liable to be cut off by the distemper and other diseases. Those bred in this country from dogs thus originally imported, are perhaps, the best; at least, I know of some which were thus originated, whose qualities are of the first order. One of the finest dogs of this kind that I ever possessed, was three parts St. John's Newfoundlander, and one part English water spaniel: besides, being one of the very best retrievers, either by land or sea, I ever beheld, he did many eccentric, and some very *thoughtful* things. After all, however, the dog which I prefer as a retriever for wild-fowl, by land or sea, is the old English "lyuer-hued water dogge," of Markham, his colour is the best for the purpose, and his nose is as good as that of any other of his kind; moreover his crisp, curled hair protects him from the cold; and, if one of the right sort, you may, by commencing his training early, and by perseverance, make him do whatever you please; for no dog is more cunning, sagacious, attached to his master and the sport, or more useful for the purposes for which he is intended.

* It is very rarely now, except as a private favour, that you can get one of these dogs at Pool, as the captains of the traders grudge both their meat and water, especially the latter, on the passage homewards. So, at least, I was informed at Pool.

A small water-dog is, at any time, superior to a large one, either for shooting inland, on the water in a canoe, or on the oozes on the sea coast. At Pool, where the mud is so soft that none but a very light dog can run upon it, the gunners there make any sort of dog into a retriever, so long as it be small in size. With them, the grand point in a dog, is, that he should "nip the cripples" in the first instance; that is, immediately after a shot has been made, should first make the best of his way from one live bird to another, giving each a killing nip, like that of an accomplished rat-dog, and instantly dropping it; and then, but not till then, bringing the whole, one by one, to the master in his shooting canoe. For one of these dogs thus trained—as ugly a little cur as a man shall see on a summer's day—from some conversation I held with his owner, a Pool gunner, I feel certain an ounce of tobacco might as well have been offered as the best ten sovereigns that ever issued from her Majesty's mint; such is the harvest they reap from one of these dogs when the winter happens to be severe. My first retriever was a terrier; and I have known good retrievers the result of a cross betwixt the water-dog and terrier; but it does not often "hit."

In regard to training, a retriever ought never to stir from the heels of his master without a signal; and when once on foot of a wounded bird, or hare, ought never to change for another, and least of all for a fresh one.

With the orthography a little modernized, the following are old Markham's excellent rules for "trayning or bringing up of his water dogge:"—

"It is to be understood that you cannot begin too early with him; that is to say, even when you first wean him, and teach him to lap—for even then you shall begin to teach him to couch and lie close, not daring to stir or move from that posture in which you put it, without your especial licence,

cherishing it ever when it doth your will, and correcting it when it doth the contrary; and always observing this maxim in the first teaching of him—that you never let your dog eat or taste any meat but when he doth something to deserve it; that custom may make it know, food is a thing which cometh not by chance, or the bounty of your hand, but for reward or merit when he doth your commandment; and this will not only make him willing to learn, but apt to remember and retain what he learneth, and diligently to perform your pleasure without stick or amazement, the characters of your commands being so deeply imprinted in his knowledge: and to this end you must have no more teachers, no more feeders, cherishers, or correctors but one, for multiplicity breeds confusion, and to teach divers ways is to teach no way well: also, you must be very constant to the words of directions by which you teach —choosing such as are the most significant for your purpose, and fittest for the action you would have the dogs do; and by no means alter that word which you first use. When, therefore, you have made your whelp understand these several sounds, or words, and that he will couch and lie down at your feet, how you please, when you please, and as long as you please, and that with a single word [or the elevation of your hand], or a look only, you shall then proceed and teach him to lead in a line and collar, following you at your heels in decent and comely order, never treading upon your heels, or going before or side by you, which shews too much haste; nor hanging back, or straining your line by the means of too much sloth; but following in decent and orderly manner, without offence either to the dog or his leader; and this kind of leading is to make the whelp familiar with you, that he may love and acknowledge you, and no man else. When this general obedience is taught (which is done by observation of his going, and moving him by sights

or sports which may tempt him to stray beyond his bounds, and then to correct his offences, and to cherish and reward his obedience), you shall then teach him to fetch and carry anything you shall throw forth of your hand."

Not exactly "anything:" say stuffed birds, rabbits, or a soft ball; but never stones, sticks, or other hard substances, which both wear his teeth, and render him hard-mouthed.

With the above, with Floyd's rules, and the exercise of a little of his own acumen, the shooter need never despair of making a sensible dog into a retriever—at least by patience and labour; and he must, at best, expect heavy and long continued draws upon both; but a dog that's a fool you can teach nothing.

With the reader's permission, I will beg to conclude this article by presenting him with a portrait of as good a retriever,

and as affectionate, sagacious, and faithful an animal as man ever possessed. "The Almighty," says Walter Scott, "who gave the dog to be companion of our pleasures and our toils,

hath invested him with a nature noble and incapable of deceit. He forgets neither friend nor foe; remembers, and with accuracy, both benefit and injury. He hath a share of man's intelligence, but no share of man's falsehood. You may bribe a soldier to slay a man with his sword, or a witness to take life by false accusation; but you cannot make a hound tear his benefactor. He is the friend of man, save when man justly incurs his enmity."

True! very true! You may also bribe a Manchester miscreant to poison this faithful creature of "noble nature,"—this "friend of man." Alas! poor BEN!—such was *thy* ill-fated end!

THE TERRIER

Is frequently used for hunting rabbits in covert, and those of the small slow breed are the best for the sportsman's purpose; though for a regular rabbit-hunter, who is at it day by day, and all day long, dogs of larger size and bone are indispensable, as the smaller ones are then apt "to knock up." Sometimes a small pack of small terriers is used in lieu of spaniels, or beagles. I know one gentleman in Yorkshire who shoots over terriers always, and whose stud presents a somewhat motley assemblage; a kind of *variorum* edition of this description of dog, as there is no kind of terrier, English or Scotch, particularly of the "ugly good 'uns," of which his kennel may not boast; he has them in excellent command, and it is quite a treat to see them at work; there is even a quaint drollness in the very names they bear. As, however, their owner has fought gallantly, and bled freely for his country, no man can be better entitled than he to enjoy the *otium cum dignitate*, and those delicious field sports which,

beyond all others, that happy country affords. Some prefer smooth, others rough terriers; the latter are generally the harder and the more picturesque; the former, the swifter, and often the better nosed. There are two sorts of rough terriers, which may be distinguished as the *soft* and the *hard* rough; the one has a sort of soft, woolly coat, in lieu of hair, and comes out of a gorse covert "as ragged as a Scotch sheep;" the other has strong, wiry hair, like that of a spire, or rough-haired greyhound; the latter is the harder and better dog for work.

Admirable rabbit-hunting dogs have been bred between the hound (the otter hound especially) and the terrier; and the cross between the terrier and pointer is at present rather fashionable among rabbit killers; but dogs thus bred, though they have excellent noses, are often disposed to be very quarrelsome; and, on the whole, I should invariably prefer the thorough-bred terrier, as well for hunting as for ferrets. Black, white, or dark-coloured and white, are the best colours for terriers, as the shooter is not then so liable to mistake them for hares, rabbits, &c.

Some terriers make good retrievers. For *vermin* killing only, and especially for fox or badger, bull-terriers are the best, but their tenacity of tooth is a disadvantage in mouthing *game*.

GROUSE.

The members of the grouse family, in sporting language, consist of the wood-grouse, or capercailzie; the black grouse, or black game; the red grouse, or common moor game, and the ptarmigan. An eminent naturalist, speaking of the wood-

grouse, says, "he was the noblest of the British feathered game;" *i. e.*, at the time when this cock of the woods, or great "cock of the north," was indigenous to our island; as for a long period antecedent to the recent Swedish importation into the Highlands, with a view to re-naturalization, the breed had been entirely extinct in Great Britain. The male bird weighs from twelve to fifteen pounds, or upwards, and the female not more than half as much. These birds are remarkable for their pugnacity; and looking to their gigantic size, formidable hooked beak, and general martial appearance, one might almost "guess" that as their numbers increase they will not long bear their weaker brethren near the throne; if so, the black and red grouse of Taymouth will be compelled to retire into "the back settlements."

Notwithstanding the extreme wildness, disposition to roam, and pugnacity of this bird, in a state of nature, we learn from Mr. Lloyd's highly interesting and instructive work, "The Field Sports of Norway and Sweden," that it is often domesticated there, and becomes so tame as to eat out of the hand. In a wild state the branches of the pine tree appear to be its favourite food, and hence its bitter flavour at table; but, as it is granivorous, also, like all the grouse tribe, if, when reclaimed, it could be brought to subsist wholly upon vegetables and grain, the bird, from its size, might become very valuable as food.

Though I have shot both black game and ptarmigan in the Highlands, and have my notes on the subject, still my experience in the shooting of both has been somewhat limited: the former are comparatively but sparingly sown, and the latter almost extinct in England, but in some parts of Scotland both still abound; and to such sportsmen as may be desirous of the best instructions in these departments of grouse-shooting, I would strenuously recommend Mr. Col-

quhoun's recent publication—"The Moor and the Loch;" a sound practical work throughout, and which should occupy a niche in every sportsman's library; for of its author it may truly be said—*quodcunque tetigit ornavit.*

RED GROUSE SHOOTING.

"Though sluggards deem it but a foolish chase,
And marvel men should quit their easy chair,
The toilsome way, and long, long league to trace,
Oh! there is sweetness in the mountain air,
And life, which bloated ease can never hope to share."—BYRON.

In the general estimation of British sportsmen, if the pursuit of the grouse be not deemed the very fox-hunting of shooting, it indisputably occupies a very high place, and most deservedly so, for whether we consider the extreme beauty, elegance, and gameness of this truly British bird itself,* its deep rich plumage, so charmingly in harmony with the lovely heather it dwells among, whose tender tops it crops for support, and under whose friendly fringed shade it cowers for protection; or whether we turn to its native haunts, whose dreariness it enlivens and ennobles—the isolated majestic heights in some of the most romantic parts of our highly-favoured isle—we are alike induced to regard it with esteem and admiration. Besides, grouse-shooting is not only the most laborious of all shooting, but is a science in itself.

* The red grouse is exclusively confined to the British Islands, and has never been found on any part of the continent."—*Naturalist's Library*, vol. iv. p. 145.

The moors are always difficult to traverse, even where they are not boggy, or very steep. Nothing fags a man sooner in walking, than a constant uneven bearing for his feet, and he seldom has any other when treading high ling, whose stems, moreover, when very wet, or very dry, are always slippery; hence the advantage of nails in your shoes, or boots, particularly if those nails be genuine steel sparables. A thin coating of soft soap, elsewhere recommended, applied outside your stocking feet, particularly at the heels and balls of your great toes, renders travelling on the moors, or anywhere else, much less irksome, especially in dry, sultry weather.

It is universally admitted that grouse are becoming generally more scarce every year in the northern counties of England, where, formerly, they were wont to abound. This may be attributed to various causes, among which the following are some of the principal:—the increased facility of reaching the moors, and of forwarding game thence, afforded by steamers and railroad conveyance; the improvements in guns and shooting; the increased daring maraudings of those wholesale annihilators—the poachers in the mining districts, who, at early dawn, kill numbers of the birds by calling, and then, during the day, proceeding in large bodies, march in line, a gun-shot apart from each other, scouring the whole country, and destroying all before them, some days* previous to, and often after, the twelfth: the multiplication of stone walls, as fences, which, in various ways, aid the poacher, especially in calling during that most killing of all times—a misty morning in

* Some years ago, on the 11th of August, an accomplished artist favoured me with a peep at sixty brace of moor game, very tastefully disposed in detached braces, and very judiciously placed in a dark, cool room, in the very centre of the good town of Bowes. I was then told that "those were what were left, and that not a brace of them would be there by to-morrow's evening."

October;—for every moor-side fellow calls, now-a-days, and prides himself upon his vocal, or, rather, his guttural powers; his "crawing" as "crousely" as the "cootie muircocks"—the increased numbers, skill, and daring of poachers in general—together with their new modes of taking grouse, especially that of the * * *; the increased number of sheep kept on the moors, which disturb the old birds, and tread on their eggs; and the consequent increased number of shepherds' dogs, also, many of which chop the *cheepers* with surprising, and, it is sometimes to be feared, owner-profiting dexterity; nay, even the bare-breasted old hen herself—ah! wilful murther!—is now and then colley-chopped on her very nest; the increased numbers of licensed shooters, and of unlicensed dog-breakers; the "carting"* and the "driving" systems; the raking the birds in the stubbles, during severe weather, and as they sit in rows on the walls, drying their beautiful feathers; the increased annual burning of the heather, or, as it is called in Scotland, moor-burn†—which, whilst it certainly promotes the growth of the young and tender heather tops, eaten with such avidity both by the sheep and birds, alarms the latter, prevents laying, destroys eggs, and even the birds themselves, when sitting hard; and a grouse rarely, if ever, lays more than ten eggs, more frequently seven, and not seldom only five. Add to these, the facts that, in February and the early parts of March, many braces of grouse are shot to order by poachers, as they are then in best feather for stuffing; and that no game is more poached out of season, particularly during the first three months of the year, than grouse.

* The "carting" is worse even than the "calling" system, as so many hens are thus killed. Sometimes a pack is composed exclusively of hens, whilst at others the whole are cocks.

† Appendix, No. 2.

The vigilance of keepers and watchers over grouse moors ought to be incessant, though it is often most relaxed when the most demanded.

If a shooter do not possess moors of his own—and but few do—there are four ways of getting grouse-shooting; namely, by obtaining permission to shoot on reputed good moors; by renting a moor in England at one's own exclusive cost, or in conjunction with others; taking a ten-pound ticket in a subscription moor, as at Bowes in Westmoreland, or Bradfield in Yorkshire—all of which I have myself done in my day—and, lastly, "hiring a hill" to one's own cheek, or joining a party to take a vast tract of shooting ground in Scotland.

Apropos of these said Bradfield moors; they are very good ones, but usually have too many guns upon them to allow of much execution being done by individuals. There is also another *leetel* drawback on the pleasure of shooting thereon, which is, that you do not always get what you shoot dead. The only time I was there, I killed twelve brace on the twelfth; two brace whereof a host of polished Sheffield blades very politely picked up before my face, and did me the favour to accept, without the ceremony of any solicitation on either side. On naming this event to a friend, on my return home, he asked me, "What dogs I had with me?" to which I replied, "a brace of pointers, and a brace of setters." "I thought," said he, "*you* had known that it is always said that no person ought to go on *those* moors without a bull-dog and a greyhound at his heels; the former to protect his person, and the latter as a retriever."

Grouse-shooting, in general, and on a subscription moor in particular, is a very different sort of thing in England to what it is in many parts of the Highlands, where the best sport of the kind in the known world is unquestionably to be obtained;

though even that varies very materially in different districts; so much so, that it behoves an English shooting party to have better authority than a mere advertisement before they agree to pay a heavy rent for grouse-shooting quarters, or "shootings," and especially if the intention be to take them on a lease; for though the hills be represented as abounding with game; the burns and rivers as swarming with trout and salmon—with a plentiful sprinkling of roe, red deer, cocks, and wild-fowl, by way of a refreshing change—the reality is often found to fall not a little short of the glowing description. Moreover, the complaint, of late years, alleged against the mountain lairds, of not taking sufficient pains to keep up a good stock of game on their grounds, is, in general, but too truly founded.

It is important to impress upon the mind of the shooter, that, preparatory to his taking a Highland trip on a shooting excursion, he should thoroughly equip himself with all the requisites necessary to insure the best sport, and, at the least, a good share also of those which appertain to his common comfort and convenience, before he leaves "sweet home."

Get your traps in readiness for some time beforehand; because, if you defer all to the last moment, you will certainly forget something of essential consequence. There is no immediate necessity to take with you a portable forge, and a journeyman gunmaker, much less a portable wooden mansion; though, ere now, all these have been comprised under the fixtures attached to a favourite grousing locality; but there are many things you *must* take besides your guns and dogs, which, of course, will be among your very first considerations. Let me recommend to you, if your guns be new from the maker's shop, to give them a day or two's trial in firing at pigeons, sparrows, or otherwise, before you finally pack them up in their cases; because it is with new guns as with new

carriages, &c., if there be any flaws in the steel, the springs generally give way, if at all, pretty soon. To shew the necessity of duplicates, or even triplicates, on such occasions—and weight of luggage is not so much an object now that we have such facilities for steaming it by land and sea—I may name that, on one occasion, I took three new double guns to the Highlands, made by three different London makers, two of them quite first-rate, and all of which, from one cause or another, became all but useless; then it was I would have given anything for the old discarded flint-lock "Joe" I had left at home, and which had been previously well tried. I could quote numberless casualties of a similar kind which have occurred to other sportsmen. Stocks and locks require "proving," as well as barrels; nor, if they give way, is the gunmaker always to blame.

In my opinion, every juvenile shooter, as soon as he has become a pretty good shot, if he can afford it, for *non cuivis homini contingit adire*, and have the opportunity, should, for once at least, endeavour to obtain a ticket on an English subscription moor; the doings there are of that diversified character, from which both considerable amusement and instruction may be derived:—

> "There's wit there, ye'll get there,
> Ye'll find nae other where."

To such novice in this kind of sporting, the following remarks may possibly prove not unacceptable.

In shooting in open ground, or on a subscription moor, it is absolutely impossible to avoid meeting other sportsmen pretty often; the moors generally present a broken surface, frequently rising into lofty hills and ridges, and hence the unexpected, and not always the most agreeable, collision of two parties, utter strangers to each other, is a case of no un-

common occurrence; each has been beating the opposite brow of the hill, unseen, of course, by the other, and on reaching its summit they suddenly pop upon each other, or, in Yorkshire vulgar, "jump together."* Nothing can be easier than for each party turning off a little to the left, to keep his own line forwards; but when two shooters winding round a hill, in opposite directions, meet together, each intending to pursue the same course forwards, the one on the right should turn off to the right, and *vice versâ;* or if one party wish to avoid the chance of any unpleasant collision, he has but to remain stationary, or to sit him down till the other has shaped his course to his liking, when he can forthwith proceed in a different direction. Never cross another's beat if avoidable, and especially that of any infirm or elderly sportsman, who may be walking or riding on the firmer ground; on the contrary, drive a pack of grouse to the latter if you can.

When a person has a moor all snug to himself, he can

* In cases like these, if an unfortunate grouse happen to rise, as very frequently occurs, he is certain to obtain pepper *extraordinaire*, or a double volley from each party, both of whom are generally eager enough to lay claim to this no-man's bird. This was precisely what occured to two friends of mine on Bowes Moor; the parties were coming upon each other by surprise, when up rose an old cock! Crack went the simultaneous volley; down fell the bird; off set a keeper belonging to the opposite party, and nearly at the same instant, off set the long-legged, Yorkshire, raw-boned, red-haired lout—a fellow full seven feet high without his shoes—whom my friends had hired as their local attendant, and who was the first to pick up the bird. "That's our bird!" exclaimed the breathless keeper. "That is *our* bird!" reiterated his offended masters. "I dare's say it *is* your burd," said lengthy York, as he deliberately placed its neck under its wing, smoothed down its feathers from back to tail, and coolly pocketed it in view:—"I dare say it is your burd, but I's dom'd if ye gets it this toime, hooiver!" This proved a settler, as well indeed it might, for

> "Lo! where the giant on the mountain stands
> His blood-red tresses deepening in the sun!"—Byron.

adopt his own plans of beating, and may then often drive the birds to advantage; because he is then wholly free from interruption; but on a subscription moor, or on other open ground, it is idle to attempt anything of the sort; because, if he fire at a pack, ten to one they will be kept on the wing long enough by being constantly popped at, first by one shooter, and then by another, as they pass by each in rotation. Indeed, on such occasions these passing shots constitute a great portion of the sport; so much so, that some shooters occupy favourite spots on the moor, which the birds are known very often to pass in their flight, and stand still, watching there, instead of ranging themselves; by this means, being always cool and collected, with eye on the constant look out, and gun at full cock, they are prepared for all customers, and often bag more birds, in the end, than those who have toiled all day in a broiling sun. On these occasions it is generally best to let a single bird pass you before you shoot, as his feathers are then more open; but, if there be a brood, you must fire, as the birds are meeting you, with the first barrel, and immediately afterwards take a cross shot, keeping your gun to the shoulder all the time; by this means you bag a brace instead of one. It is not easy; indeed, very much the reverse; but "for a' that" I have frequently seen it done. This sort of shooting may be compared to "flight shooting" at wild fowl; indeed, it is flight shooting, though neither sporting nor sportsmanlike.

On approaching a wall, be ready with your gun, for it often happens that birds, and especially a single bird, will rise pretty close to it on one side or the other; it is best, therefore, to let your attendant get over before you, as the noise he makes will raise the birds, if any be near.

Always keep a sharp look out on subscription moors, when many shooters, besides yourself, are on the ground, for

the packs being soon completely broken, the birds keep dropping by odd ones, and often in those spots which would be deservedly passed as unlikely at other times, when the ground was in an undisturbed state. In some instances these single birds will "lie like stones;" in others, they are particularly wild. But, in fact, you must ever be on your guard, as a bird may now rise anywhere at any time.

It often happens that there are small detached enclosures of ling (sometimes a quarter of a mile or more distant) at the sides and extremities of large moors, whither birds on such platooning occasions are wont to fly, and as they generally lie very well in such places, and are seldom molested by other shooters, two or three brace may occasionally be picked up in pretty quick time. These, also, are the last spots the shooter should contrive to pay a visit to on his way home in the evening, as they are often favourite places of resort, and the birds, being then a little on the feed, are less wary, and are both slower in rising and in flying away.

In regard to dogs for the moors, as "a very little wet," as Mr. Lascelles justly remarks, "causes grouse to become wild and unassailable, and the chance of pursuing them to any advantage very uncertain," it is absolutely improper to hunt more than one dog whilst the heather is in a wet state; but when it is dry, and a few hours morning sun in August will effect that, then two or three dogs may be run together with advantage, as in high ling the dispersed birds, on a subscription moor, having been so much harassed, will generally lie to be almost trodden on, and, if there be but little or no wind, a dog must come close upon a bird before he can find it, and even then will often spring it.

All dogs for grouse-shooting should, at all times, be particularly steady; not a syllable should be required to be spoken to them; but all done by hand work, unless the whistle be occa-

sionally used as a signal for them to turn, grouse being the most sensitive and the soonest disturbed of all game.

On subscription moors, grouse-shooters should always range singly, with a silent, intelligent, sharp-sighted follower in attendance, who, at the least, knows the nature of such shooting, and if he be acquainted with that particular locality so much the better; and both should be on the ground not later than half past four o'clock, unless there be a rule absolute against firing a gun before eight o'clock in the morning; when, as clocks *will* vary a little in the country, some few "random and distant guns" will be heard about ten minutes before the appointed hour.

A true sportsman never shoots at any but well-grown birds. But worse even than the habit of shooting birds of immature growth, is that of shooting the old ones; for if the brood consist of *cheepers* they perish outright, and if of birds of somewhat larger growth, this loss of their natural protectors renders them not only far more open to future danger, but is extremely injurious to them in every other way. And here it may be remarked that the usual weight of an old grouse may be twenty-two or twenty-three ounces; but I knew one instance, in Yorkshire, where a cock grouse weighed twenty-eight ounces, and an old cock grouse, which I shot and sent into Yorkshire from the lowlands of Scotland, weighed twenty-nine ounces; nearly a wine glass full of small, white, sparry stones were taken from its crop. I have heard of a grouse weighing as much as thirty ounces.

Grouse roost on the ground, and, about daybreak, leave their russet couch, and begin to call; soon after which they run or fly to their open feeding grounds, where they are chiefly to be found before eleven o'clock in the morning. These are, for the most part, those patches of young, green ling, of two years' growth from the burning, and where the stalk is

sufficiently high to conceal the birds. To ground of this kind it is that the poachers resort; the heather there being even at the top, and the stalks not having yet become stubborn from age, yield to the net. On this account, on some moors in the north, these plots of feeding-ground are stubbed as regularly, and with as much care, as the grass enclosures are for the protection of partridges. About noon the grouse go to water, and then retiring to the sunny side of some brow, or into hollows sheltered by hillocks, or masses of rock, under cover of the tallest heather, trim their feathers, bask, or sleep, "in all the delight of imagined security." Though the scenting at mid-day is notoriously bad, yet you may, now and then, in such situations, stumble suddenly upon them, and catch them napping, when they will often rise in confusion, separate in different directions, and afterwards afford you good single shots. On these occasions you should hunt closely and slowly, and give your dogs the benefit of the wind.

Like other game, grouse have their favourite haunts, according to the kind of locality they are in, the time of the day, the state of the season and the weather, &c.; and as these vary, it follows that, universally, a thorough previous knowledge of the ground to be shot over, gives one shooter, at all times, an extraordinary advantage over another who is wholly ignorant in this respect.

From the unvaried sameness and frequently apparent interminability of moorland districts, as well as from the similarity of their shades of colour to the plumage of the birds themselves, grouse especially, in certain states of the atmosphere, are much more difficult to mark down than partridges. Generally speaking, the nearer a man's eye is to the ground the farther he will mark grouse, just as a man, when sitting or lying down in a canoe, will mark wild-fowl farther than one who stands erect. Always follow the course of the birds care-

fully with your eye, and immediately on losing sight of them, stare well forwards, in a lineal direction with the spot where you were last able to distinguish them, when you will often be agreeably surprised (just when about to say farewell) to catch a sudden sight of them again, in the act of flapping their wings to alight, as they are then not only stationary in the air for the moment, but often turn, and are thus rendered the larger and more conspicuous.

Whenever you lose sight of a covey, just as they are whipping over the summit of a hill, keep your eye on the hindermost, or tail birds, because if the leaders turn, after they have topped the hill, the rest are sure to follow, and thus you will know the line of direction the whole have taken. Grouse having longer wings, and being stronger birds, usually fly farther and with much more rapidity than partridges.

If the birds divide and take different courses, your attendant marks one division, and you the other, and when one is out of sight, you both endeavour to mark the remaining one. The hand placed edgewise above the eyebrows—or both hands (where both are at liberty) placed winker-fashion—by concentrating the view, and shading your eyes from the wind, are considerable aids in marking.

A telescope, with a large field of view, and which draws out but once, when in expert hands, will often be found far superior to the naked eye in marking grouse; of course, it should always be carried by a friend, or your follower, regulated to the proper focus, say—as the best distance—for three-quarters of a mile; it will be thus at all times ready to be applied to the eye in a moment. Were any one disposed to shoot for a wager, on a moor not very numerously stocked with game, I should be inclined to back, against any other plan, good markers, in heather-coloured caps, placed in *flight shooting-boxes*, sunk on the loftiest heights. The markers, of

course, to be duly posted before the beating commences. Each marker might have two flags—one a red, and the other a black one—as distant signals.

As regards the best mode of ranging on the moors, it is an invariable rule, with many, to select a particular tract of ground, often lengthwise of a sloping ridge, or the steep side of a mountain, under the wind, and within gun-shot of the summit, and to beat *that* backwards and forwards, from end to end, all day long. This may be a very good plan where the plots of ling are generally luxuriant, and when there is a platooning carrying on in different parts of the moor; but at other periods, to my fancy at least, there is a sameness and a dull monotony in it, but ill comporting with that wild and romantic scenery, and those boundless prospects which the moors usually present to the eye, and seem to woo the contemplative man to partake of and to enjoy. A little departure "in bold disorder" from rigid or formal rules; a little roaming on the moors; adds zest to the sport, albeit, at times, the bag may be somewhat the lighter for it. That man who, enjoying the cool elasticity of the mountain breeze, and walking on a carpet of purple heather, is yet withal bent on slaughter only, may be a good shot, but he is a tasteless sportsman.

When you commence ranging a grouse mountain, always take the leeward side the hill, and give your dogs the wind; such I believe to be the usual plan with experienced sportsmen. Nevertheless, I frequently range down wind for grouse, and invariably so in boisterous weather, for then the birds often lie closer, and keep their heads down, and, therefore, can neither see nor hear you so well; you also have a much more distinct sight of them, with the wind at your back, than when it is blowing a moorland blast full in your face and eyes.

Many sportsmen never think of going on the moors after August, or September at the latest; whereas, if the birds have

had a tolerable respite, as frequently is the case, they are much more easily found by the dogs in October, than during dry, sultry weather; will often lie as well on a fine day, especially one succeeding a black frost; and in point of size, fulness and beauty of plumage, and excellence of flavour, are incomparably superior to the birds of earlier date.* Besides, all game are now well afoot, and, occasionally, seek the seclusion of the mountain dell, and the friendly shelter of the heather; green and golden plover, too, are also plentiful now on some moors; the latter deservedly in high estimation as a dainty: duck and teal, too, at times, are no strangers to moorland districts, which now and then supply the ornithologist, also, with "fine specimens" of rare birds (not game).

Towards the end of October, it is very well known that grouse, especially when much disturbed, become so wild and wary, that, to pursue them with any chance of success, the shooter must have recourse to stratagem of some sort. Most of these ingenious contrivances—such as circumventing and heading them—are but too well known; and some of them bear a close relationship to the occult science. The cut at the close of this article exhibits a somewhat novel mode of

* I agree with Mr. Lascelles, where he says:—"Grouse continue to increase in size and fulness of feather till November; and then, in my opinion, have a nobler appearance than any other description of game whatever." At the same time, when the tops of the ling have been much frost-nipped, their food being thus rendered less succulent, the birds themselves are somewhat deteriorated in flavour: this seems to be peculiarly the case with those ice-packed, beautiful ptarmigan, from Norway, which taste so dry, and which are so pitifully plentiful in London in the months of April and May, and so many of which are spoiled and wasted by the heat of the weather. Grouse appear to be not only quick feeders, but birds of powerful digestion; one that has been shot, even early in the evening, has generally its crop pretty well distended with heather tops; but that of a grouse, shot at break of day, will be found perfectly empty.

obtaining elevation when a wall is otherwise too high to allow the shooter, when properly concealed, to fire over it. "A good stout barreled gun, that carries a large charge, and one steady old dog, will be the most effective." So says Lascelles, with whom I perfectly concur, being confident that, take one time with another, a stout, single-barreled gun, with a large bore, is infinitely preferable, at this late period of the season, to any double whatever, except on very strictly preserved moors, where the birds are comparatively tame; and if the shooter renew the sport after an early dinner, I should, for the afternoon, strenuously recommend a single, a pound or two lighter than the one used in the morning; partly because he will be by so much the worse than he was at first starting, and partly because the birds are always tamer as evening approaches. On these occasions, loose shot should never be thought of. Eley's cartridges must invariably be the order of the day, containing shot never smaller than No. 3, nor larger than B. I generally prefer the latter to any other size for this sort of shooting. Many sportsmen use No. 6 at the early part of the season; but, in my opinion, grouse should never be fired at with shot less than No. 5, either when loose, or in Eley's cartridge. A light gun is of but little use in grouse-shooting.

You have your attendant either three or four yards, or at a considerable distance behind you, as may be. A single knowing dog, accustomed to the moors, for the morning, and another, of a similar stamp, for the afternoon, are now sufficient; the man leading one of them, clothed in a brown coloured sheet, or stripping him and letting him loose at your signal. If the dog be up to the trick of heading the birds, it will sometimes be found advantageous.

Unless you chance to come upon a reposing covey, huddled together in the middle of the day, nearly all your shots now will be snap shots. You must, generally, walk rather slowly,

and have your gun full cocked, and in readiness to whip up to the shoulder as quick as thought. During the morning, the birds usually rise very wildly, especially if in packs; on these occasions never shoot at random, for it is neither sportsman-like nor good policy. Small broods and single birds afford the best shots. Being now very strong on the wing, and their flight rapid, you must be extremely vigilant, and keep your eye well forward, as they rise at long distances, often in silence, and frequently steal away, barely clearing the top of the heather, so that, before you have fairly caught sight of them, they have flown at the least ten yards. Rise as they may, however, so long as they be within shot, take them quick, and shoot high enough, and, if a cross shot, forward enough as well; but, above all things, I repeat, fire quickly; for the error of an inch or two in aim, is of far less consequence here than half a second's delay, as it frequently happens now, that a bird which rises within shot, is out of shot by the time he has flown five yards. In fact, none but a real good and quick shot has any business to follow this kind of shooting.

Grouse should always be closely watched on being fired at, as they are so apt to fly long distances after having been mortally wounded. At no time, perhaps, and certainly not under peculiar states of atmosphere, can you so clearly distinguish the momentary flinching (on being struck) of a grouse as of a partridge. Again and again have I seen a grouse to all appearance untouched, after having been fired at, fly as far as the eye could carry one, though at no time a yard from the ground, and then suddenly drop; but, when picked up, the florid beak has told, alas! of recent death—the cause, a single blue pill. Perhaps the best way to destroy a wounded grouse, is to press the thumb upon the higher part of the back, until you feel the separation of the vertebræ.

The grand time for making sure of grouse, at this late

season of the year, is towards evening, when, as has been already remarked, birds being on the feed are less wary, and are both slower in rising and in flying off than during the day. Small, detached, walled enclosures of ling; low, steep hills, well clothed with heather; and such parts of a moor as abound in concavities, with fragments of rock and overhanging banks here and there, are the places for getting shots, as you may sometimes come upon the birds unawares. I would seldom use a dog now, except to recover a wounded bird: let, therefore, him and the follower keep aloof. You will find your account in having your own private marks as guides to the nearest points of approach to the birds. If on being compelled to show yourself, you expect them to rise at some distance from you, proceed stooping, and with stealthy caution, and put your gun to your shoulder before you rise; but if you look for them springing just under you, as from the side or foot of a hillock, then having silently advanced to the top of it, introduce yourself suddenly to their notice, or pop upon them, when they will be more likely to rise perpendicularly, like mallards or pheasants, than to skim away, and, consequently, to present a nearer and a fairer shot; and if they be too near for a cartridge, which will rarely happen, you have only to give them a little time before you fire, and very little will be found sufficient, as they make very good use of it.

From the very nature of the moors, their boundaries cannot be so palpably defined as those of cultivated districts; it behoves the shooter, therefore, to be particular in ascertaining the prescribed limits of his range, as in the event of trespassing he may not always come off so well as did a relation of mine, whose Christian name is Tom. Early one twelfth morn, this worthy gent., who is remarkable for the large size and protuberance of his visual organs, made one of a shooting

party on a friend's moors; but, having a natural taste for rambling, being an ardent admirer of the picturesque, and a little addicted to absenteeism withal, had not paid the attention he might have done to the boundary posts, and accordingly became a tresspasser upon an adjoining and very strictly preserved moor. Here he met with capital sport, that is to say, got many shots in quick succession; for he is the very worst shot I ever saw, excepting none; when shortly afterwards up came a watcher, who lost no time in requesting his name, and in giving him to understand that "he must immediately inform of him as a wilful trespasser, he being then upon Mr. * * * 's Liberty." "It's a liberty I've taken," said Tom, gravely, inflicting his gogglers the while upon the fellow. "O! indeed, sur," replied the astonished and unconscious guardian of the preserves, doffing his catskin, and making his most submissive bow, "I humbly begs your pardon, sur, but I really did not know, as how, that you was the gentleman as had taken this here Liberty, but you'll find plenty of burds, sur, on that there broo side, sur."

PHEASANT-SHOOTING.

"Ah! what avail his glossy varying dyes,
His purpled crest, and scarlet-circled eyes,
The vivid green his shining plumes unfold,
His painted wings, and breast that flames with gold."—Pope.

There are some philanthropists who profess to hold the pursuits of the sportsman in deep abhorrence; and, really, when one surveys the gorgeous plumage of that majestic and elegant bird, the cock pheasant,* as he stalks across the velvet lawn, in all the stateliness of pride, and all the confidence of security, attended by his favourite *brunette*, ornamenting, enriching, and ennobling all that surrounds him; and then, again, after a fatal shot, as he lies supine, quivering in last agonies, and, like the dying dolphin, displaying changeable hues of colour more brilliant even than in life; will not compunctious visitings sometimes unwelcomely obtrude themselves upon the shooter? Alas! gentle reader, the subject is too painful to dwell upon. Leaving, therefore, the sentimental to others, let you and I insist on the "rights paramount" of the lords of creation, and, after a little further discussion on pheasants and pheasant-shooting, take our guns, and those three beautiful, silky-coated, black-tan spaniels—away to the woods—and endeavour to put our practical hints into practical effect.

Although pheasants with care, attention, and a regular

* The *horned* pheasant and the *tufted* pheasant, in the Himalayan mountains, in India, are each of them much bigger, and, perhaps, more gorgeous in plumage than our own; but they are not equally graceful in gait, and elegant in form.

and abundant supply of food and water in covert, especially in winter, may be propagated upon almost any soil, yet they prefer, and do infinitely the best upon, sand or gravel, and where no pains are taken to keep them at home, they will never stay long on clay soils where those more congenial to their habits and disposition are not far remote. It has been justly asserted that they are fond of alder-cars and willow garths; the fact is, these afford considerable shelter, and are planted in ground easily scratched up, and which, probably, abounds in slugs, insects, and reptiles; all congenial to the taste of the *Phasian* tribe.

Though bold enough in fight, the pheasant, as the observant Waterton justly remarks, has "that most singular innate timidity within it which baffles every attempt, on our part, to render its domestication complete."* Being thus nervous, thus "brightly bold," yet "beautifully shy," and naturally indolent withal, it will remain where it can obtain food and enjoy quiet, otherwise will ramble for miles in quest of a situation better suited to its natural inclinations. In very boisterous weather these birds are wont to stray off from even a favourite covert, and that too, however well fed they may be; and when once they take to running before the wind, sometimes go a considerable distance, and will often lose themselves, and take shelter in thick hedgerows, or small plantations. They appear, also, to be lost, or *mist*ified, in foggy weather, as during such they are often found far from home. On these occasions they generally wander off in small companies of three, four, or five in number, chiefly cocks. I do not mean to assert that all the pheasants in a covert will do this, but some will. This may arise from the bird's natural disinclination at all times to fly, and especially in the teeth of a gale of wind, or through a dense atmosphere. They leave

* "Essays on Natural History," p. 98.

covert early in a morning, and a little before sunset in an evening, for the purpose of feeding, and are thus prevented returning. Hence all other circumstances being favourable, coverts for pheasants cannot be too near the centre of a manor, and, it may be added, the less they are driven or disturbed the better, especially in windy weather. Whenever a preserve is beaten thoroughly by men and dogs, pheasants are certain to be found out of covert on the following day, and sometimes at a considerable distance from head quarters. Similar results attend the matutinal *covert* exertions of a well-intentioned band of poachers.

I have myself noted the partiality of the pheasant for both "hips and haws;" *i. e.*, the seeds of the wild-rose and of the hawthorn, especially the former; as also for acorns and buck-wheat, and it is said to be fond of beech-mast, the tubes of the Jerusalem artichoke, the seeds of the sunflower,* cabbages, young clover, grasshoppers, and wire-worms; and, like the pea-fowl and poultry, can now and then relish reptiles, or a bit of carrion, by way of a change; nay, it has even been known to kill and eat small birds with the gusto of the hawk. In short, as the author just quoted observes, "this bird has a capacious stomach, and requires much nutriment," and nothing, it should seem, comes amiss to it. Alas! alas! how little do we know what we eat! Who would suppose that a gaudy pheasant could revel on carrion? The finest trout I ever landed—short, thick, heavy, and brilliant in scales—had "an ugly and venomous toad"† in its stomach! Like the

* In some districts of Russia, the seeds of the sunflower are employed, with great success, in fattening poultry; they are also said to increase the number of eggs more than any other kind of grain. Pheasants and partridges eat them with great avidity, and find the same effects from them as other birds."—BREMER'S "*Excursions in the Interior of Russia.*"

† Nothing wonderful; there are many *toadies* of bright exterior!—P. D.

pigeon, too, our pheasant is a great lover of salt, large lumps of which might, probably, be placed with advantage in coverts.

For artificial feeding, however, in covert, pulse and corn (either given in the grain in open troughs, or in pheasant-feeders with a rising lid, or in the sheaf, or in well-thatched little stacks, covered on the top with boards), are usually employed, and sometimes boiled potatoes. For feeding merely with a view to keep them at home, perhaps beans and boiled potatoes, as Waterton recommends, are the best winter food; but if the object be to kill them also, well, then, "goodness goes in at the mouth," and the better the corn it is fed on (barley is usually employed),* the better will be the flavour of the bird, and artificially fed pheasants, so long as they remain in a wild state, are the best of all for the table. I have heard it asserted that Indian corn is found to be the most fattening of all grain for pheasants.

Pheasant-shooting commences on the 1st of October, when the nides will be found, like coveys of partridges, to vary both in size and numbers, though even the most forward birds will be much improved by the respite of a week or two after the opening day. There is no pleasure in shooting pheasants, or any other game, in woods, until the branches are leafless; although, with even this great disadvantage, they may be butchered by wholesale, except in very thick covert, by having a team of well-broke human springers, with long beating wands, and a steady old pointer, and by two shooters placing themselves, one on each side, thirty or forty yards in advance of the beaters, and two a short distance behind them,

* Barley, on the whole, is in general the best thing for feeding, and is better given in the sheaf than in grain. The birds peck amongst it, and, from their not getting to it so readily, it goes farther."—Rawstorne's "*Gamonia*," p. 151—4.

the birds which lie well often flying backwards. As some of the birds, especially the old ones, are certain to run to the sides, and particularly to the ends of the covert, the boundary fences, and the adjacent hedge-rows, should be tried immediately after the covert has been sufficiently beaten in all other parts; for here you often get many shots, and fair ones too. Hedge-rows, contiguous to coverts, are always likely for pheasants, and, most of all, those hedge-rows which run from one covert to another, they being, as it were, a connecting link between the two; but, generally speaking, hedge-rows are the most likely pretty early in a morning after a rainy night, when the drip from the trees appears to annoy or to deter the pheasants.

Pheasant coverts should always be well beaten, even to the very corners, and especially in the early part of the season, as a nide of pheasants will often be found near together. Some years ago I rented a manor in which was a covert abounding in pheasants; it consisted of a steepish slope, with a southern aspect, and was separated from the long wood of an adjoining manor by a perennial rill; the greater part of the oaks had been felled two years, and were pushing vigorous shoots from the old roots; the place, also, was, in some parts, a complete thicket of briers, brambles, and hazels, with a mixture of hollies, and a few gorse-bushes; in short, there was covert of all kinds and growths. In this preserve, on one occasion, without stirring a yard from the same spot, I had six fine pheasants lying dead (the result of as many shots in quick succession), evidently all of one and the same nide.

Shooting pheasants in covert, with well-broke springing spaniels, is decidedly the most spirited and sportsman-like way of "doing the thing," and, in thick covert, by far the most efficient; an old pointer (out and out the most generally useful of all dogs single handed), may often be very serviceable

in open covert; but, as a previous author remarks, with great aptness to the occasion, "when a man goes out with his pointers and bells, I think he should not forget the cap for his own head."

The pheasant is often a difficult shot in covert from his rising so swiftly and then gliding off—

"'Mid the dim gloom of intervening trees;"

but, in the open, he is a very easy shot to a cool hand. The tremendous whirring noise with which he rises in thick covert, or hedge row, is, to a young shooter, most awfully appalling at first. One grand point, in this sort of shooting, is to place yourself, if possible, advantageously for a shot; a clear shot being often of far more consequence than the being ten or twenty yards nearer to the rising bird without such advantage. Indeed, to be a good shot in covert, place himself as he may, a man must have—

"The quickest eye-sight, and the readiest hand."

As it is unwise, on account of the extreme timidity and vagrant turn of these birds, to beat pheasant covers too frequently, you should select a day when the wind is blowing from preserves immediately contiguous to your own, as the birds will then be more likely to run or fly forwards into your liberty, or, if they face you, will be exposed to a double discharge, rendering their safe arrival out of bounds extremely problematical. You will, of course, start with your back to the boundary hedge-row, brook, or other fence, and from that part of it which, from experience, you have learned that the pheasants, when once afoot, most usually make for; otherwise, if you adopt the opposite plan (be the wind, indeed, as it may), by the time you have well got into the wood, some of the old cocks will be making the best of their way to the forbidden ground as fast as their legs can carry them, and that is

no slow pace; and many of the rest will rise out of shot, and wing their flight in the same untoward direction, and the later the season, and the more naked the covers, the more wary do the pheasants become. The coursers' plan of returning each time on the tried ground, in order that they may range the whole field with their backs to the covert, will often be found admirable policy in beating a pheasant covert, which requires being taken at different times.

But where a party of shooters, in a covert, of low growth and of moderate extent, are silently, safely, and judiciously stationed and *elevated*, prior to its being beaten, no bird escapes without affording a shot; this may not be the most correct sort of sporting, but there are cases where it is not only justifiable, but absolutely necessary for you to adopt it, in your own defence. Your neighbour, for instance, may happen to be "an odd sort of man;" fonder, too, it may be, of roast pheasant than of you, and his keepers a saucy set, who make a point of killing all the game wanted for home consumption, close to your preserves. In this case, if there be no roads nor vistas cut out, having, by means of a few sods and sticks, raised square mounds, two or three feet high, at three or four points of vantage in the copse-wood, perch a double-barreled friend upon each, and when the "human mongrels," with their long wands, commence thrashing away in good earnest, a peculiarly lively, and rather a thrilling scene presents itself. You happen to be placed in a deep-wooded valley, with the advantage of a powerful echo, which swells the report of a fowling-piece to that of the roaring of ordnance. "Mark! — cock-pheasant!" "Mark! mark! — a cock!" Bang— bang. "The blue neck falls instantly under the burnished wing;" the long bill as quickly points perpendicularly downwards, and it is just about an even wager which of the two will reach the ground the soonest. All glittering in the sun,

what a beautiful picture of "still life" they present! "Mark! —a hare!" Bang—over she rolls. "Mark!—a HEN!—no go!" "Mark!—cock-pheasant!" Bang—bang—bang,—miss—miss —miss: still there is that tolerably stout single in reserve in the valley, loaded with No. 2, Eley; but the bird is a terrible height, and too far off—full seventy-five yards; and don't you observe, also, at what a rate he is going? No matter.—Bang —what a beautiful echo! Down he comes, almost perpendicularly, from his towering height, and with "such a whop!" Verily he is within half a yard only of the boundary fence! And pray "who are you" on the opposite side that fence, looking on so intently and engagingly? Three keepers, I declare.

In a thickly wooded country, pheasants rarely take long flights; but, when they are found as stragglers in the open, they will frequently mount to a lofty pitch, and then wing their way completely out of sight, especially if they are old cocks, and with a brisk, driving wind in their favour; after such a flight you will rarely refind them, except by pure accident; for, when almost exhausted, they will drop anywhere, and will remain on the very spot where they alighted, so that unless the shooter or his dog happen to stumble almost upon them, he has no chance of setting eyes on them again; wherever pheasants are expected to be, and especially on occasions like this, it is useless hunting for them unless the dog have the advantage of the wind, for, when once settled, no bird stirs less, or lies closer, than a pheasant. How many hares and pheasants are left sitting in hedgerows after a brace of excellent pointers have followed each other down the windward sides of them!

The hare takes long leaps, previously to seating herself, to destroy the scent, and, if possible, to elude the dogs; with a similar view, the pheasant frequently terminates its flight by

flapping its wings over the very middle of a thick bush, or hedge-row, and descending (or, as it were, throwing itself) through the branches to the root, where it sometimes perches, a little above the ground, in the thickest part of the hedge (such is their dread of exposure), and there remains perfectly stationary. A similar instinct directs the hen pheasant, during the season of incubation, to alight only upon the nest whenever she returns to it, and, as another author has observed, the stratagems used by an old cock pheasant, in a large and thick covert, when he feels himself pursued, before he can be forced to take wing, as well as his equally wily endeavours, when winged, to puzzle the dog, endeavouring to foot him out, are all convincing proofs that the pheasant is not the stupid bird which some take him for, nor one by any means at a loss for schemes for his own preservation.

Where turnip fields are pretty contiguous to covert, about four o'clock in the afternoon, during the winter months, you may, by keeping the covert behind you, and with one steady dog, frequently pick up two or three brace of pheasants with all imaginable dispatch; he must quarter his ground either naturally, or to the motion of your hand only, and drop to wing, or gun, instantly.

A fine show of pheasants is certainly highly ornamental to any demesne, and as valuable, in a sporting point of view; yet they may be cultivated to an extent injurious even to themselves; for, "at Abbey Milton, the seat of Lady Caroline Damer, in the county of Dorset, there was a time when the keepers complained that the pheasants were so very numerous they did not grow to their proper size." Fortunately, however, there appears to be no present foundation for alarm lest this should become a general complaint; particularly in certain districts which it were not difficult to point out.

Where pheasants abound, the sport, though partaking of eastern magnificence (for assuredly these birds make a resplendent shew in the air), is yet withal somewhat tame. We cannot tempt the long-billed Norwegian to follow at the heels of a whistling keeper, or to taste of beans and steamed potatoes; but where they are really *rarœ aves*, if a man happen to do such a thing as to shoot a cock pheasant the tumefied frog in the fable were a tad-pole to him! It is sure to be the finest cock pheasant ever seen; and all the country, for ten miles round, are as certain to hear of it in a week! Just greet him in the fields with the customary sporting salutation.—"Poor sport to day," he replies, "but, ten days ago, I can assure you, I shot the finest cock pheasant ever seen! I sent him, per mail, that very night to Leadbeater's; d—n the cost," said I to Lead., "only let him be well done, and let me have him returned soon in his new case! When I get him home I shall be glad to show him to you. I intend putting him alongside my stuffed fox in my little *sanctum*, and—mind me—if *you* don't say he's the finest bird you ever beheld! Talk of all gold! you shall see him, and then,—but, as I always say, let every man judge for himself! His neck, I assure you, may vie with the rainbow, and as for his tail, that, believe me, is as long as a greyhound's!" But there *are* giants among the pheasant tribe, and we have one well authenticated instance of a cock pheasant, shot by Richard *Missing*, Esq. [a decided *hit!*] in Hampshire, which weighed three pounds nine ounces, and measured, from the bill to the extremity of the tail, one yard ten inches. Cock pheasants, when full grown, usually weigh from two pounds and a half to three pounds, and the hens about ten ounces less. They are extremely wholesome and excellent food, and have been considered such in all ages, though the hen is much the better of the two, and, by many, preferred to all other game;

nevertheless, to shoot a hen is little short of high treason: a heavy penalty

——— "thy forfeit—Gold,"

awaits the first offence, and woe be to him who is guilty of a second!

After having shown my high respect to that excellent sportsman and agreeable author, the late Rev. William Barker Daniel, by having quoted him so often, I am sure that some of my readers, at the least, will relish the following gastronomic hint from the same source—his "Rural Sports"—where, speaking of pheasants, he says, "the hens are certainly more juicy and every way preferable, still the real sportsman feels a twinge whenever he sees a hen pheasant destroyed. They are best roasted, and, perhaps, the most eligible mode of dressing an old cock, is (after being kept a proper time) to stuff him with the lean of the inside of a sirloin of beef, cut into pieces, the size of dice, and well seasoned, the gravy issuing from the beef gradually diffuses itself through the flesh, and renders it less dry and hard than when destitute of this supply."

The whiteness, or pale horn colour of the bill, the length and sharpness of the spurs, which are extremely hard and fine pointed "in some old birds,"* as Bewick says, "as sharp as needles;" and the rougher scale on the leg, distinguish the old from the young cock pheasant, after they are no longer distinguishable in point of size. The rougher scale, and bluer colour of the leg, which has a small knob upon it (in lieu of a spur), more prominent as they increase in age, and the graver plumage, are the chief distinguishing criteria betwixt the old and the young hen pheasant.

Notwithstanding the acknowledged elegance and splendour of this noble bird from the banks of Phasis (now Rioni), of

* Those, probably, which are four or five years old.—Author.

which the worst that can be said of the least attractive of the genera, is, that it is

"Beauty to the eye;"

still, like other birds, it has its choice specimens. Of sixty-four of those very beautiful birds—shell-ducks,—which I shot in the Tees Bay, in one season, there were but six really good specimens for preservation, and of these but two were *super*excellent. Beautiful, yet apparently so much alike each other, as are pheasants, I am disposed to think that scores are shot for one that approaches to perfection in the eye of a Stubbs, a Read, or a Leadbeater. A few years ago Mr. Stubbs shewed me a superb specimen of cock pheasant which had been sent to him for preservation, by Lord Wenlock, of Escrick, near York, in whose preserves pheasants swarm; the size of the bird was extraordinary; and its vivid, glossy plumage was so superior to that of any other bird of the sort I ever beheld, either before or since, that, when alive, I am confident it would have been immediately conspicuous among a flock of old cock pheasants, *velut inter ignes Luna minores!*

No one who, on a bright autumnal morning, has seen a fine cock pheasant nobly rising from a valley, on whirring wing, and skimming over the tops of a grove of oaks or spruce firs, on a steep acclivity, can fail to have observed how extremely picturesque the bird then appears.

Pied pheasants, or such as are partially white; *i. e.*, having a mixture of white blended, in a greater or less degree, with the natural colour, are frequently shot. I have shot several myself, and have seen others both in a wild and in a preserved state. The ring-neck pheasant differs from the common one in being smaller, and in having a white ring round its neck. Modern naturalists appear to favour the idea that these varieties are distinct, and do not interbreed. We have long

had a pure white variety in some of our British preserves. Many years ago, when at the Newmarket Coursing Meeting, on observing a number of white dots on different parts of a distant fallow, I was, on inquiry, surprised to learn that "they were only Mr. Tharpe's white pheasants." There are also some other choice Chinese varieties of the pheasant now at large in our preserves, which, but a few years ago, were confined exclusively to the cage, the aviary, and the Zoological Garden; but how these delicate varieties withstand the rigours of our climate, or what their flavour, or the sport they afford may be, I am unable to say.

The pea-fowl and guinea-fowl have also been made game of in some parts of England; and I am acquainted with one Yorkshire gentleman in whose coverts that noble bird, of true forest origin—the wild turkey of America,—is to be seen.

Nos. 3 and 4 loose shot, are the best general sizes for pheasants; but Nos. 1, 2, and 3, in Eley's cartridges, may, at times, be found superior to loose shot, and especially when taking the outside range of a covert whilst it is beaten, and where hares and rabbits may be looked for as well as pheasants.

PARTRIDGE-SHOOTING.

"If the partridge had the woodcock's thigh,
'Twould be the best bird that e'er did fly."

ALTHOUGH partridges are the most numerous and generally diffused of all game, being found in nearly every part of the globe, though chiefly in temperate climates; still, as they

are nowhere more plentiful, more highly prized, as a table luxury, or for field diversion than in England, where they are emphatically styled, *par excellence*, "birds," like the red grouse, they may almost be considered exclusively national. No shooting is more generally followed by the majority of our sportsman than that of the partridge; nevertheless, there are but few who have not something to learn respecting it; neither is the partridge, common as it may be, in my humble opinion, the bird at all times the easiest to bring to bag. It must be recollected that its wings are short, its body round and plump, its flesh firm, and its feathers hard, and that, therefore, it is neither so easily hit nor killed as some erroneously imagine; furthermore, it is a bird so thoroughly game that, when full grown, it will fly away with nearly as much shot as a blue rock pigeon in January, although the latter is much better protected by feathers. A young partridge getting up from a fog field, or a high wheat stubble, in September, when "grey peas thrown out of a riddle," or pelting them with a few shot-corns, carried loose in your waistcoat pocket for the purpose, may beat them down to the earth, and the same bird springing from a short stubble, after he has begun to taste the green wheat, demand a very different style of shooter. Again, there is no kind of game that requires so much field knowledge, or generalship, as partridges; hence an experienced and astute old hand, will often beat a younger, though an equally good shot, without going over nearly so much ground.

There are two kinds of partridges—the grey and the red-legged; the former, the common partridge just spoken of, a native of this country; the latter, superior to it in size, but inferior in flavour, a foreigner. This red-legged variety is pretty plentiful in Suffolk; but those who have pursued them the most, like them the least, and universally admit that the

sporting world would have no reason to lament the entire extirpation of the breed.

Our male partridge, it is said, weighs nearly fifteen ounces, the female an ounce less; they vary, however, in this respect, and are always the largest and heaviest in corn countries; though they are proverbially "plump" at all times, even in very severe weather, be their size what it may. The partridges I shot on the edges of the moors in Scotland quite astonished me at first, as they must do every sportsman accustomed previously to shoot only the big-grown birds of a rich agricultural district, by the dulness and dark colour of their plumage, and their extraordinary diminutive size; but there, with the exception of a few bad oats, the chief support of the partridge, like that of the moor bird, is derived from the heather, which gives them a smack of the ling, just sufficient, in the opinion of some, to enhance their flavour.

The bill and legs of a partridge are the chief distinguishing criteria of its age. In the young bird the bill is brown and the legs yellowish; in the old, the bill and legs are of a blue white—the latter of a somewhat deeper shade than the former; but as the young bird increases in age, so do both its bill and legs rapidly change colour, approximate, and ultimately resemble, those of the old birds; so closely, indeed, that, in November or December, the one is scarcely to be distinguished from the other, even by a practised eye. An experienced hand, with "a mellow touch," will, perhaps, form the most correct judgment, then, by placing the fore finger and thumb on each side the breast bone. The common and simplest mode of deciding the point in question, is to suspend the bird, by placing the under mandible betwixt your fore finger and thumb; when, if it bear its own weight, and the beak remain immoveable, it is old; but, if the beak bend, the bird is young. This plan is a sure criterion at first, but I doubt

its infallibility when the bird is full grown, and towards the close of the season.

Like pheasants, partridges prefer light to heavy soils; and, in a clay country, wherever there happen to be partial veins, or tracts of sandy soil intermixed, they are sure to find them out in the breeding season, though every bird in the immediate neighbourhood may have been previously shot.

The earliest broods of partridges begin to fly toward the latter end of June, after which their plumage undergoes a variety of changes until the beginning or middle of October, when the bay or chesnut-coloured feathers appear, and form the crescent, or, what is technically called, the horseshoe, upon the breasts of the birds, which is very conspicuous on the male,* but faint and ill-defined on the female; and it is not until this mark is completely developed that they can be properly called partridges; for until then they have not fully moulted; and what bird can be really in perfection during that period of debility? They may be in season according to Act of Parliament, but not according to Nature. Nay, so fastidious are some—that I am acquainted with one sportsman who never shoots at partridges until the middle of October; and with many who never partake of them until they have begun to eat the green wheat, when they are justly con-

* No supposition has been more generally received, as fact, than this marked distinction between the sexes; yet an eminent modern ornithologist (Col. Montague) declares that he has "proved it to be a mistake by the unerring rule of dissection;" and that "he found the males could only be known by the superior brightness of colour about the head, which alone seems to be the mark of distinction after the first or second year." If this be the case, it would appear rather fatal to the professed skill of some very superior marksmen in being able to single out the cocks, by the eye, from a flying covey; and also to the generally credited advantage of netting a covey to destroy the old cocks, with the view of increasing the future stock. —Author.

sidered wilder in the field, as well as finer flavoured, and more juicy. Were this taste more fashionable, a modern practice, as disgraceful as it is ruinous to all fair shooting, might, perhaps, cease to exist; or, at all events, might become less common. I allude to those "poachers who wear the garb of shooters;" those pot-hunters who "take out certificates *to kill game*," and who draw no line of demarcation between the late hatched birds—commonly called, from the shrill shrieks the poor little timids emit on being roused, "squeakers," or "cheepers"—that can scarcely fly above the stubble, and those which are well grown and strong upon the wing; and who, so long as they can bag so many brace of *partridges*, properly—as *they* think—so called, consider themselves justified in making their boast accordingly, and hope thus to acquire and maintain the reputation of crack shots.

For my own part, I think but little of partridge-shooting, at least in the north of England, before the 20th of September at the earliest. Previous to this, a great portion of the oats, and all the beans, are yet unfit to cut; the ground is frequently dry and hard, the weather oppressively sultry, and the scent bad; the shocks of corn hide your dogs partially while ranging, and sometimes totally when pointing; the gleaners disturb the birds from the stubbles; and now and then the report of your gun frightens the team, which upsets the wagon-load of corn and the man on the top of it! Moreover, the forwardest of the young birds are often small, and many of them but mere cheepers.

But, methinks, the juvenile reader is beginning to be impatient for the delightful opening day—the 1st of September, and glad I am to announce to him—here it is!

Partridge-shooting commences, as all the word know, on the 1st of September, and terminates on the 1st of February, inclusive.

Provided you have watchers on the partridge ground, or can be certain that you will not be anticipated by other shooters, if you be there by nine o'clock on the morning of the 1st, it is soon enough, and far better than "to have been uselessly dabbling in the dew;" and then such coveys as are not in standing corn, may be found in stubbles, tufty old sward, fog, fallow, or potatoe-fields, immediately contiguous to standing corn, and into which they are almost certain to fly the first time they are shot at. Though birds, when disturbed, may occasionally fly to turnips, they are rarely first found in them at this season of the year. They are often to be met with now in such small enclosures as contain three or four different kinds of crops, with intervening portions of fallow; but in these your dogs are liable to do mischief, by threading the standing corn; for in very few districts, at least north of the Humber, are the whole of the white crops down by the 1st.

The way to make the most of a covey, at this time, is, to have efficient markers posted so as to command every point of view; for though the birds, when dispersed, seldom fly far, yet, when thus terrified, they will drop almost anywhere; will generally "lie like stones" wherever they drop; and as the weather is now often sultry, and not a breath of air stirring, the best of dogs may pass by without acknowledging them; but, if marked down, or pretty nearly so, they may be found with a little extra research. On these occasions, if the covey rise out of shot, still fire both barrels in the direction of the birds, to awaken the markers, and "to *report* progress." Yet as this plan of a multiplicity of markers, or of human in lieu of canine *indices*, leaves the birds next to no chance at all of escaping, there are people ill-natured enough to designate it, by an opprobrious and highly disrespectful nomenclature, commencing with the letter P.

When you are without markers in partridge-shooting, both

now and at all other periods of the season, the best plan, when the birds are dispersed, is to leave no part of your ground untried, and to be careful to give your young dogs the benefit of the wind, however light that may be; the old ones, if good for anything, will need no directions from you on this score. No plan is more unscientific, or less sportsman-like, than leaving a broken covey behind you to go a steeple-chasing after some "great unknown" one, of which, perhaps, you may have heard but a vague rumour; it is quite "a freshman's" trick, and something very much like quitting a certainty for the chance of an uncertainty. The man who finds a covey of eight in the morning, and contrives, by heading them, or otherwise, to break them, and to get his four or five shots afterwards, may possibly kill fewer birds than he who rambles unmeaningly in nearly a direct line over a country; but the former, hit or miss, has done his day's work in a sportsman-like manner, the latter in a slovenly one, and, *cæteris paribus*, would ultimately be beaten out and out by his more knowing brother of the trigger. Moreover, it may be observed that no plan tends to make dogs more obedient, careful, or habitually researching, than insisting upon their hunting closely where dispersed birds may be expected to have dropped; for it is with dogs as with men—that which gives the most trouble in the seeking, is the most highly prized when, at last, it is found; and ranging at random not only engenders habits of wildness and irregularity, but, like shooting at random, is uncertain and unsatisfactory in the result. Give me an inquisitive young dog; he may, at such times, flush a bird; but the best of old ones will do that, especially when the ground is dry, with little or no wind; and for such fault (if fault it be) a dog should be only sharply spoken to—never punished.

During the meridian heat of the day, the birds repair to

water, and thence to some sunny bank, or to the potatoe ridges, for the luxurious purpose of basking; and this, too, is the proper season of repose for the shooter and his dogs, for the heat is oppressive and the scenting bad. About three o'clock the birds will again be on the run; and as the sun has now less influence, and as a cooling breeze frequently arises at this time of day, the sport of the afternoon is generally found superior to that of the morning. Partridges, especially when not constantly harassed, are very apt, after having been sprung and shot at in the morning, to return to their old ground again during the day.

When coveys of partridges are allowed to remain undisturbed, and are never shot at during the season, I know, from experience, that they will seldom move very far from the field in which they were hatched; and, perhaps, will be more frequently in it than in any other; they are, also, at all times, much tamer than coveys which are harassed by sportsmen in the usual way; and were all coveys to be shot at but seldom, although rules might vary somewhat in different parts of the country, still such might be laid down as would be of pretty general application to all. It might then be predicted, with some degree of certainty, where the haunts of coveys would be according to the situation of the country, the season of the year, and the hour of the day. But now that game is becoming so much scarcer than formerly, and that shooters are so multitudinous, the birds, except on some preserved grounds, are persecuted to that degree that they must feed and repose when, where, and as they can; and you are nearly as likely to find them in one place as in another. Yet, perhaps, after all, though not given to roaming, partridges are naturally more ubiquitous than is generally allowed; "their haunts," as an old sporting author observes, "are not certain, like the pheasants, but various: any covert will serve their turn, and sometimes none at all."

A few general rules may be noted. Take the season through, shorn wheat-stubbles and turnips will more frequently hold partridges than any other fields. At all periods of the year, they are much more on fallows, especially on the land side nearest the hedge-row, than is generally supposed. How often, after having carefully, but in vain, ranged the high and likely stubbles for that large covey which has been seen there so many times, by so many different people, have you received the welcome intelligence, on the following day, of their having been put up, by a coursing party, on the adjoining fallow—and most *un*fortunately—just after your departure homewards! "You had not been gone five minutes, I can assure you," quoth your informant, "when we flushed them in Snodgrass's fallow. In all my life, I never saw such a covey! I counted three and twenty myself, all as big as the old birds; but the poachers are sure to get some of them. Pray try again for them to-morrow; but be sure you do not miss *that* fallow!" The fallows, in fact, are the preserves—and well it is they are so. In the month of January, if the weather be fine and open, birds frequently resort thither when they lie very close; and, as they then offer tempting double shots, more are often bagged about that time than during the two preceding months; but the sportsman who has a provident eye to his next year's show, will reflect, now, upon what he is doing when about to destroy a brace of fine young birds, or even a single one, and especially if they be near home.

Furze covers, fern, especially on warrens, and patches of cole-seed, are favourite harbours for partridges. They are also frequently to be found among long white grass in young plantations; and, very often, on badly cultivated and neglected lands. Upon a farm of this kind, left tenantless for a considerable period, the partridges, to my certain knowledge, literally swarmed—as if all the birds in the lord-

ship had congregated thither by common consent. The cover, the quietude, and the seeds and insects found there, had all, I suppose, their attractions.

Partridges will, sometimes, lie close in foggy weather; as also on the day preceding a storm, often a remarkably fine one, what the sailors call—"a weather breeder;" and on the first calm and fine day after a storm. I have known them lie extremely close in high turnips, during heavy rain, although, generally speaking, wet weather is most inimical to partridge-shooting; for even though the birds be dispersed, they will not lie when their feathers are wet; they also lie close on young wheats, after a frosty night in December, that is to say, about the middle of the following day, when the sun shines brightly; then, a quick shooter gets beautiful shots right and left; and then partridges are fine birds. They have always been a favourite delicacy in England, as the old distich which heads this article serves to shew, and are extremely palatable, cook them as you may; yet are, perhaps, never so juicy and excellent as when boiled * and smothered in onion sauce, like rabbits. Try them, reader, in this mode, after they have begun to taste the green wheat.

There have been many extraordinary performances in partridge-shooting by individuals; of these, the following from Daniel is, perhaps, one of the best on record:—

"In 1810, on the 3rd of September, John Lacy, Esq., of Wimborne Minster, shot upon the Manor of Verwood, Dorsetshire, which does not extend beyond 2,500 acres, *thirty* brace of partridges, *ten* brace of hares, and *twelve couple* of rabbits; he commenced his day's sport with the rising sun, and closed it at four o'clock. Six servants, with four brace of

* Give *me*, though, cold roast partridge for breakfast, on a shooting morning; and tell me—*eh?*—what's better than cold roast partridge and a glass of sherry white-wine for lunch?—P. D.

pointers, attended him." Although unable to claim the honour of the slightest personal acquaintance with my namesake, yet I certainly feel proud of his performances; and most respectfully beg leave to state that, in case of "a failure of (heirs) hares" on his manor, I should feel peculiar satisfaction in being permitted to submit my humble pretensions—to use a somewhat rail-roadian phrase—to carry on the line. I can assure him that my ability to prove the fact of an important branch of my patrician ancestry having, at the period of the conquest—I rather think at the personal suggestion of the Conqueror himself—removed from the inhospitable regions of the north, to the more genial climates of the south, rests on grounds far more solid and less equivocal than the uncertain rumours of mere oral tradition. Even at that remote period, the family were renowned for their consummate skill in archery; and to this day, whilst some whose name is spelled like ours, are so ignorant of shooting, as scarcely to be able to distinguish a gun from a fire-poker—the genuine race are invariably characterized by an ardent passion for the sport, inferior only to their dexterity in the use of the fowling-piece. Furthermore, a covey of nine, and the old birds, is no bad stock to commence with in any manor; nor, in all human probability, would there be any danger of future extinction of the family name.

The size of shot best adapted for partridge-shooting will, in some degree, depend upon the country in which they are killed, as regards its being a preserved or a wild one; upon the season of the year, and the size of the gun. In turnip countries, birds almost always lie sufficiently well to admit of rather small shot taking effect—hence, Nos. 5 or 6 will, perhaps, be the best, at first—though a larger size will generally be preferable after the commencement of October, and especially where other game may be expected to be met with.

WOODCOCK-SHOOTING.

"Cock-shooting, with good spaniels, combines all the harmony and enterprise of fox-hunting; and I had much rather kill two couple of cocks, in a day, than ten brace of partridges or pheasants."—LASCELLES.

"What language assures us of the remembrance of an absent friend like a brace of woodcocks?"—"*Punch*," p. 12.

WOODCOCK-SHOOTING, or, as it is usually called, for brevity's sake, cock-shooting, is—what, reader?—shooting, indeed! "If Pope be not a poet," says Johnson, "where is poetry to be found?" And if good cock-shooting be not the prettiest of all popping, the very concentrated essence of prime shooting—what is? I pretend not to deny it, reader; I cannot deny it, that after the long respite, betwixt the 1st of February past, and the 12th of August instant—after an "*hiatus*," I cannot say "*valde deflendus*"—for man and dog, both require the agreeable interchange of respite, and of sporting exertion, as well as the poor birds themselves a little leisure to breed in tranquility, and thus to repair their lost numbers—there *is* a something peculiarly delightful and exhilarating in the anniversary of twelfth morn! For then—oh! how—

"Sweet is the breath of morn, her rising sweet!"

and, after a rare good day's sport, when the lid of the game-pannier closes with difficulty, and a pleasing weariness pervades the shooter's frame—oh! how—

"Sweet the coming on of grateful evening mild!"

The moors themselves, too, are delightful then; the weather

fine;* the days not short, the heather luxuriant and blooming; the golden orb rides the azure vault of heaven, shedding his benignant rays—"the smiles of God upon his dependant creatures"—far and wide; and, if the shooter feel parched and weary, the crystal gushings from yonder mountain side are there to silver his prospect, to lure him to their cold babblings with invigorated steps, and to invite him to quench his thirst. But still, this is not cock-shooting! True it is, the brown heather teems with muir game; shots are got in ready succession, and bags are as quickly filled, but soon the shooter begins to feel—

"The fulness of satiety:"

he knows beforehand that his game is there in rich abundance; there is no interesting "glorious uncertainty" of a find. His dogs seem to cry—"Hold, enough!"

But suppose it autumn now, autumn well advanced, the mellow tints partially spreading from oak to oak; the graceful birchen spray denunded of foliage, waving in the leafless void; the air, how cool, pleasant, and invigorating. "Now, my young friend, allow that inquiring eye of thine, for once, to repose on yonder gloomy grove, thickened with lovely evergreens, and kissed by that broad and shining river which rolls below in yonder dell. Dost think that grove may hold a sportsman's prize?"

"Perchance it may."

"Dost recognise the scene my friend? I tell ye 'tis Nunnery, in Cumberland.† Enter there; see, already Sappho draws! He's *up!* He's *down!*"

"But where's the use of that second barrel, now, I plied with such effect on the moors? He's down, 'tis true, but what's a single bird?"

"A single bird it may be, yet gaze a moment—no more—

* Sometimes.—P. D. † Appendix, No. 3.

my friend, upon that bird as now it lies winged at your feet, before you stoop to take, destroy, and bag the prize!

"Mark the soft pencillings on that lovely barred breast! Look at the hues on the upper coverts of that wing; they are not gaudy, but yet how rich! how charmingly blended! Survey those smooth and delicate feet; that fine, dark, mirror-like eye; that somewhat grotesque yet not inelegant bill!"

"Still, I repeat it; there's but *one* bird!"

"True. But the trackless morasses, or the forests of the wild North, where the snorting elk rejoices in his security, gave that one bird birth. It's none of your *home-breds!* Not one of a covey or a pack. It is the bird of *other* climes which has braved the fury of the tempest, and crossed the wide ocean. It is the bird so highly esteemed at the board of the English gentleman. It is the vagrant fugitive which has sought a temporary asylum under English oaks! It is—a woodcock!"

Singular in shape, structure, and appearance; singular as our choicest dainty; singular in manners and habits—the woodcock is altogether a singular bird. "He is," says Montague,* "naturally a shy and retired bird, rarely taking wing by day, unless disturbed; but, just at the close of day, all, as if by common consent, quit the wood nearly at the same instant, and wander over the meadows in search of splashy places and moist ditches for food, retiring to their hiding places again just at the morning dawn. Thus, when most other land birds are recruiting exhausted nature by sleep, these are rambling through the dark, directed by an exquisite sense of smelling to those places most likely to produce their natural sustenance; and by a still more exquisite sense of feeling in their long bill collecting it. The eye is not called

* "Ornithological Dictionary," p. 561.

into use, and, like the mole, they may be said to feed beneath the surface; and by the sensibility of the instrument which is thrust into the soft earth, not a worm can escape that is within reach. The eyes of the woodcock are large in proportion to their general bulk of body, and, like those of some other nocturnal birds, are particularly framed for collecting the faint rays of light in the darkened vales and sequestered woodlands, during their nocturnal excursions; thus, also, they are enabled to avoid trees and other obstacles which continually occur. The nerves in the bill of this bird, as in that of the duck tribe, are numerous, and highly sensible of discrimination by the touch. A woodcock in our menagerie very soon discovered and drew forth every worm in the ground, which was dug up to enable him to bore; and worms put into a large garden-pot, covered with earth, five or six inches deep, are always cleared by the next morning, without one being left. The enormous quantity of worms that these birds eat is scarcely credible; indeed, it would be the constant labour of one person to procure such food for two or three woodcocks. The difficulty of collecting a sufficiency of such precarious aliment, determined us to try if bread and milk would not be a good substitute; and we found that, by putting clean-washed worms into the mess, the bird soon acquired a taste for this new food, and will now eat a basin of bread and milk in twenty-four hours, besides the worms it can procure." After this, there can be no difficulty in accounting for the number of *chalkings*, or mutings, one sees on the feeding-grounds of woodcocks, since it is clear that the bird's powers of quick digestion are equalled only by its voracity. That the woodcock, with its bill, "turns over, and tosses the fallen leaves in search of insects which shelter underneath," and often bores for worms by day as well as by night, or, in other words, feeds more or less at all hours, seems pretty certain,

as, when shot, he often betrays a recently soiled bill. I have, also, on more than one occasion of picking up a dead cock, found a worm in its mouth in a sort of transparent gelatinous state, which led me to imagine that, as with man, the first digestion is with the teeth, so, probably, the mouth of the woodcock may—from secretory glands, or otherwise—possess a highly solvent power; nor do Colonel Montague's statements, just quoted, appear to me to militate against this conjecture.

I have never met with more than two kinds of woodcocks, the one the common muffed, or muffled cock, of which the female is generally the largest, and the other a much smaller bird of darker plumage, and of later arrival, generally called "the little black cock." Whether or not these last usually keep more together in covert than the larger kind, I cannot say; but, a few years ago, when shooting in Cayton-Gill, in Yorkshire, I had the good fortune, without stirring two yards from the same spot, to spring, and, in two double discharges, to bag, two couple of well-fed cocks all of this diminutive sort. At first I imagined that my attendant had been the only eye-witness to this my little bit of extraordinary luck; but a raucous voice, from an opposite wood, exclaiming, "I thinks, sir, cocks is rank (numerous) o' your side to day!" soon convinced me of my error, for there stood one of the keepers of an adjoining manor.

Courteous reader, I once had a pointer named "Sappho," but few, I opine, ever had a better, a better need never run before a tail; I had shot some cocks at Nunnery aforesaid; there had been torrents of rain just then, and the river Eden, much swollen thereby, was running with considerable rapidity; some small flocks of wild ducks came flying pretty low up the river, when, under concealment of the trees, I fired and brought down a couple which were borne down by the stream.

Sappho had never been taught to retrieve, in fact was at no time allowed to touch a feather; but upon a few sticks being thrown into the water, to direct her attention to each floating bird, accompanied by a little verbal encouragement, she presently had the sagacity to discover that if they came to bag at all, it could only be effected by her own prowess: accordingly after a little whimpering and canine speechifying, on the bank, first looking wistfully in my face, and then at the ducks, in she plunged, and soon brought them both to land. I do not mean to assert that there was anything so very extraordinary in this, but there was something mighty agreeable in it. The ducks were very small, though bright in plumage, and delicately formed; I believe they are peculiar to, and breed in, the vicinity of the lakes. One of those lakes near to Nunnery, "Tarn Waddling" by name, should not be bad for *ducks*.

And now for a few more cock stories: I do not mean "cock and bull stories," but narratives of facts. Many years ago the following occurrence happened to myself. I fired at a woodcock flying in a lineal direction for the back part of my own house, and at the distance of something more than a quarter of a mile from it; the bird, though evidently hit, as indeed a *post mortem* examination incontestibly proved, continued to preserve the "even tenor of its way;" shortly afterwards in passing the house, in further pursuit of it, I was informed that "a very remarkable thing had just taken place, a woodcock had absolutely fallen close to the kitchen door, and had been bagged by the cook!" The bird having failed in its attempt to top the house, had struck its head against the wall, and, falling on the flags below, had, opportunely enough, fallen also into the very best of hands, of which the after skill of our *artiste* afforded the most deliciously convincing proof.

As regards the period of the annual passage of woodcocks

into this country, although stragglers reach us in September, yet no regular flight may be looked for before October, how favourable soever to migration the wind, the state of the atmosphere, and other circumstances, may be. From a long residence on the eastern coast, and a pretty close observance, I should be inclined to date the arrival of the main flight of woodcocks from about the 12th to the 24th of October; though second importations, *sometimes* equal in number to the first, now and then take place in the early part of November. The largest flights usually come over, when after a *long* prevalence of opposing winds—for, I perfectly agree with Daniel "it is the *wind* and not the *moon* that determines the time of their arrival"—in October, there is a sudden chop round to the east or north-east, and when "it comes on to blow" a gale or a hurricane. Then it is that these birds which have long been congregated together, anxiously waiting, like wind-bound ships in a harbour, for "a fair wind," like them, lose no time in taking the earliest advantage of it. Right well do I recollect an occasion of this sort, when a sudden change of wind took place at ten o'clock at night. It was one 23rd of October. On the strength of this delectable elementary movement, by three o'clock on the following morning I was on horseback, and on my road to "The Spurn Lights," which I reached by break of day. I ought here to remind my youngest readers that these luminous edifices are situated on a peninsula at the mouth of the Humber, on the Yorkshire side that estuary, being connected with the main land by a narrow strip of ground occasionally overflowed by the tide. The peninsula, or island itself,* which may be a mile long, and half a mile broad, is composed of ridges of sand, for the most part covered with bent grass, and upon it stand two light-houses, which, at that time, belonged to two brothers named

* Appendix, No. 4.

"Angel Angel;" and with a lighthouse each, yielding a vast annual revenue of *shiners*, one would have supposed they might have remained—

"*Angels ever bright* and fair!"

But, somehow or other, the demon of discord crept in, and they went to law; which no less a man than Counsellor Maude hath declared to be "a bad salve for any sore." The case was tried at York, under some old, almost obsolete, process, called "Writ of Right," and when, to be brief, one of the brothers got both lights, whilst the other, alas! became—

"Cui *Lumen* ademptum!"

Every one knows that the glare from these lighthouses attracts the woodcocks and other migratory birds at night; especially when the nights are rendered the darker—as was the case in the instance now alluded to—by the blackness of the storm; and no sooner was it light enough to distinguish a cock from a cock-shooter, than forthwith sallied forth, assembled from all the country round, what is called, in Yorkshire vulgate, "all macks (makes) of folk," with guns to match; some of them, especially the black-faced colliers from vessels anchored for shelter under the lee of the island, with long boots on, looking droll and ferocious enough. The scene, on the whole, presented a motley and most warlike appearance, a continual succession of firing being kept up for a full hour or more; the cracking, at times, being more like a Waterloo volley than anything approaching to sober game-shooting. All the "flights of fancy" of Messrs. Seymour, Tregar, and Co., were here depicted in hideous fidelity. On one side might be seen a fellow in long boots, with leg in hand, writhing to and fro, and exclaiming, in accents by no means wanting in energy, against "that d—d fellow there, who had shot through his boots;" on another you saw a gentleman industriously employed in counting the pellet holes in

the skirts of his shooting-jacket, and so forth; all was bustle, hurry, and confusion; and, in the universal eagerness to obtain shots, not one in ten proved successful; besides, whenever a bird did fall, the man who picked it up appeared, according to Spurn law, to consider himself the rightful owner thereof. Lots of cocks escaped by taking wing for the opposite coast of Lincolnshire.

At first I adopted the usual racing plan, and the moment a cock alighted, or was coming past me, ran my hardest towards him; but a man who's "blown" is in a bad condition for shooting. Accordingly, having observed that most of the birds made for the higher ground, I became a fixture there, and soon had five couple of cocks in the bag, shooting, also, a couple of widgeon out of eight which came flying over my head, and, on my way home, a pheasant—a rare bird in that country. Though a vast many cocks were slaughtered on this occasion, there is no doubt, had the number of shooters been limited to but one or two good and steady shots, that nearly double the number of birds would have been bagged. The keeper of the lights told me that, now and then, a large flight of cocks would come in November, when not a gun nor a shooter was to be seen on the whole island.

The darting rapidity of the woodcock's flight,

"When the dim twilight slumbers on the glade,"

is sometimes like the glancing of a meteor; indeed, the well-authenticated fact of one of these birds having flown with such violence against the outside of a lighthouse, in Ireland, as to break a pane of plate-glass, more than three-eighths of an inch thick—breaking, at the same time, his own bill, head, breast-bone, and both wings—shews the almost incredible velocity with which the woodcock can fly at night; the more so, as many other and heavier birds had previously shared a similar

fate there, from a similar cause, without the glass having been injured.

The lighthouse at Flamborough Head, near Burlington, on the same line of coast as the Spurn Lights, is, from its locality, peculiarly attractive to flights of birds crossing the German Ocean. These flocks, now and then, have afforded extraordinary diversion to sportsmen in that neighbourhood; in exemplification of which I may mention that, a few years ago, Harrington Hudson and C. T. Soulsby, Esquires, of Bessingby, commencing a shooting excursion after twelve at noon, actually killed thirty-two woodcocks and nine wild ducks before night! These same two gentlemen, though in a measure unknown to the sporting world, and who, perhaps,

"Would shrink to hear the obstreperous trump of fame,"

have been known to walk side by side, and shoot with double guns for a whole morning, where partridges were abundant, without giving the marker the trouble to make out a table of *errata*.

The prevailing opinion is, that woodcocks, on their arrival in this country, are invariably lean in condition; which, however, is by no means always the case. A good deal, probably, may depend upon the sort of seasons they have had abroad, the time they have been detained there on short commons by contrary winds, and upon the favourable or unfavourable state of the weather they have had to encounter on their passage. I once handled a woodcock, shot on the eastern coast, weighing all but sixteen ounces, that probably had never tasted food since his migration; and have shot many twelve and thirteen, and one fifteen, ounces, under similar circumstances. At the same time, I have killed others I would not have shot at, had I previously known how poor they were.

From its general structure, and from the arched formation

and immense spread of its wings, in proportion to its size, the woodcock is admirably adapted for rapid flight; but its quick digestion,* demanding constant supplies of food, unfit it for remaining on the wing for any great length of time. And hence, if, in his autumnal migration, he leave the continental coasts in prime condition, with the wind and all other circumstances in his favour, I apprehend he "does the distance" in a wonderfully short time, and with no great loss of flesh. But how his brother emigrants, those diminutive beauties, the little golden-crested wrens, manage to cross "the herring-pond" at all, much less during the raging of a storm, has, to me at least, always afforded matter of profound astonishment. Unless, indeed, under the lofty vault of heaven, there be some milder ethereous tracts, of peculiar buoyancy, through which these tiny voyagers may skim at ease, whilst the pealing thunders roll, and the vivid lightnings play, betwixt them and the tempest-tossed mariner below.

It has been conjectured that woodcocks might reach us from the continent of America; but when we know that, after a passage of but 300 or 400 miles, they are frequently so exhausted as to be but too glad to drop anywhere, the moment they reach *terra firma*, and have been picked up, ere now, unable to rise, by the cottager close to his own door, we may safely pronounce it physically impossible for them to achieve, at one flight, an aërial voyage of as many thousands of miles.

That the woodcock, in certain favourite situations, occasionally breeds in this country, is a fact which has been too often indisputably ascertained to admit the shadow of a doubt; and though Daniel states what, probably, in his day,

* An intelligent writer, in a sporting periodical, says, "it is a curious, but, I believe, well-known fact, that the snipe, or woodcock, but more particularly the former, will fatten in the space of a few hours when they find plenty of nourishment."

was correct enough, that "there is no account of woodcocks having ever bred in Scotland," yet many examples to the contrary, and of late years especially,* are on record: at the same time these partial instances of residence with us throughout that year, though well authenticated, amount to no more than mere exceptions to that general law of nature which would seem to confine the propagation of this family of the long bills to the bleaker regions of the north, amid the inhospitable wilds of Lapland, and the gloom of Scandinavian forests.

But it is high time to proceed to more practical details.

It may be observed, then, that although the eastern coast may, for a chance day or two, afford the best wholesale cock-shooting, because, on their first coming over, on their return in the spring, or during very severe weather, cocks and snipes, though then generally so lean as to be hardly worth shooting, make toward the sea, yet these birds usually prefer the interior of the country, and though they cannot now be said to abound anywhere in Great Britain, yet they are much more numerous in some parts of it, for instance, in Wales

* The following recent instance I must be excused for quoting, because, whilst it illustrates the text, it displays, also, one beautiful trait of sagacity and maternal affection in Lady Woodcock's character, besides adding one more to the many peculiarities appertaining to this interesting and highly-prized bird:—"*A Fact for Sportsmen.*—On the 1st of July, 1841, as Mr. Graham Stirling, of Strowan, was on his way to fish in the pond at Drummond Castle, and when within the Deer Park, he flushed a brood of young woodcocks. Three of them flew over the park fence; the old one fluttered along the ground, and picked up one smaller than the rest in her claws. Mr. Stirling put her up three different times, in order that he might be certain of the fact. The fourth time the old bird dropped the young one close to the paling, among some ferns, where it could not be found. This is a curious fact in natural history, as it has been hitherto held that these birds do not breed in Scotland."—*Glasgow Courier.*

and in Devonshire, than in others. They are also much more plentiful in Ireland, and, in proportion to its size, in the Isle of Man than here; the winters being milder in these islands than in our own, and drainage as yet not so prevalent. Four years ago, when in the Isle of Man, I was credibly informed, one November evening, that "twenty-three cocks had been flushed that morning from a plantation at Ingebreck," the favourite haunts of cocks in that island; I was also told that, a few days before, "cocks had been sprung in small coveys from the ling on South Barule," being flights, it was supposed, on their way to Ireland.

The first fall of snow drives both hares and woodcocks from the moors and open grounds into the woods, though cocks will be found in cover by the end of October, and pretty plentifully in November, be the weather as it may.

Cock-shooting, in coverts not too thick, with well-broke handsome spaniels, or little cockers, is, perhaps, the most picturesque and delightful of all sporting; but beaters with long wands of hazel, or ash, who will keep in regular line abreast, and "stop" and "go on" at the command of the laird, or his friends, as they fire, load, or take their respective stations, will be found a very efficient, though not so sporting-like a substitute. Markers eligibly and safely posted before the beating commences are of the greatest possible service in woodcock-shooting.

All experienced cock-shooters are aware of the propriety of trying the evergreens,* as a friend of mine calls the hollies. In a wood of ten acres, which I occupied for seven years, but

* "A laurel, or a holly-bush, is a favourite place for their repose: the thick and varnished leaves of these trees prevent the radiation of heat from the soil, and they are less affected by the refrigerating influence of a clear sky, so that they afford a warm seat for the woodcock."—"*Salmonia*," p. 332.

three cocks were flushed during the whole of that period, and all these were near to holly-bushes, though there were but six in the whole wood.

Most sporting authors have cautioned the uninitiated shooter as to the aptitude of the woodcock to run from the spot where he was marked down. If he run at all, it is almost the instant he alights, and with considerable speed, as I myself have witnessed when unseen by the bird.

The woodcock, at times, is very sluggish; at other times he is as lively as you please; sometimes he will let you have two or three shots in succession at him before he takes a long flight; at others, he springs wild from the very first, and defies your skill. To-day you find him easy enough to mark, to-morrow he is the most "artful dodger" in existence. To-day a slow shot may bring him down, to-morrow he baffles "a crack;" and, certainly, when whisking round the corner of a wood, or when flushed among the trees, he darts upwards with velocity, threading his zig-zag course, under cover of the branches, until he find an outlet to enable him to clear the tops of the trees, or to pursue a horizontal direction, he often presents a shot so difficult, that even the quick-shooting Sir Richard Sutton himself may sometimes be posed to stop him in his loud-flapping career.

Besides those already named, the woodcock appears to have many peculiarities; such as his regular annual return to his former locality, or the wood he occupied the previous year: his epicurean daintiness, despite his voracity, in the choice of his food, there being some coverts apparently most likely to hold him, but in which he is never to be found, whilst in others more congenial to his taste, if one cock be shot he is certain to be succeeded shortly by another, even though several be destined to share the same fate in succession: his sagacity displayed by the fact, that, although he may pitch in a thicket,

he always takes care that all is clear above him, so that "you never see him as you will a partridge, entangled in his rise, or blundering among the bushes in his hurry to escape:" his instability of abode, and sensitiveness of the changes in the weather; for though, in his migrations, he gladly avail himself of the wafting breeze, or the driving violence of the hurricane, yet in sylvan solitude, impatient of storms, no bird sooner seeks the shelter of the leeward side the hill.

A few instances of woodcocks having been caught in steel traps set for vermin, has induced the belief, with some, that they are birds of prey; but, if these rare instances have not been purely accidental, might it not be the case that the bird mistook a narrow shred of fleshy fibre, attached to a part of a rabbit, or other bait, for a worm. Tame woodcocks have been known to eat lean beef when cut into slips resembling worms.

The average weight of woodcocks is about eleven ounces and a quarter; but as the superiority of the bird, as a table luxury, depends so materially upon its being well fed, neither size nor weight are of so much real moment as condition, though, of course, the bigger they are the better, provided they be fat. Daniel speaks of one "killed near Holywell, which reached the weight of twenty ounces;" he also very justly remarks of these birds, that they "are fattest in December and January; from the third week in February, when they usually pair, until their departure, they are greatly inferior in flesh and flavour."

The bird is always roasted, but the next time, reader, you are surfeited with so much roast woodcock, let me beg of you to cut off the head of one, and put him in a dumpling. *Probatum est.*

No. 6 shot is the best general size for woodcocks, either loose or in Eley's cartridge; but, when wild, Nos. 4 and 5,

Eley, will often be found destructive, as they are by no means strong birds.

I feel, reader, unable to conclude this subject without informing thee that once I had the honour to be a member and the secretary of a woodcock club. Our meetings were of the friendly, agreeable, sociojovial description; and though, as a body, we now no longer exist, individually, I believe, we are all still in the land of the living. By one of our late members, I know his favourite toast—"The Cock Club"—will daily be "drunk with honours," and will be forgotten only when, for him, dog, gun, woodcock, and social companion, shall have lost their charms for ever! Our sport, I ought to state, was, on the whole, considering our beat, pretty good; and even our worst days were attended with better success than those of a woodcock club, established at Caher, in Ireland, whose "return list," during two years, it is recorded, told but of

"ONE SEVERELY WOUNDED!"

SNIPE-SHOOTING.

"A snipe gliding through aquatic plants, alternately hidden and half displayed, is a very pretty sight."—Mudie.

"There's a twofold sweetness in double pipes;
And a double-barrel and double snipes,
Give the sportsman a duplicate pleasure."—Hood.

Snipes are found, in greater or less abundance, in every quarter of the globe; but in many parts of it, as in America, in Egypt, the Hebrides, the Orkneys, and even in Ireland, they are much more numerous than in England, where we have, at the least, three distinct varieties; *viz.*, the jack, half-snipe, or judcock; the common or full snipe, and the great or solitary snipe; the first of which weighs barely two, the second four, and the last eight ounces, though each species is wont to vary in weight. All of these are, more or less, distinguished by their elegance of form, and antelope plumage; and all are esteemed for their delicious flavour, although the jack, deservedly, has the preference; at the same time he is but a mouthful, and affords an admirable illustration of the *parva non contemnenda*, as, after a few turns on the spit, he becomes the richest of all tit bits. In plumage, also, he is the richest of his kind, and one of the most beautiful of birds, "the scapulars, rump, and other parts of the back, being glossed with rich metallic reflections of purple, bronze colour, and green." He comes to us later and leaves us earlier than the common snipe, and has very rarely, if ever, been known to breed in this country. He is a saucy little fellow withal, remarkable for taking short flights in general, and for lying

very close; so much so, that he may frequently be observed crouching with his little neck outstretched, and his chin touching the ground, within a few inches only of the dog's nose, and nearly as close to his master's foot, and in which position I have seen him covered with a hat. Except in very windy weather, when other snipes are, by many, considered better to shoot, the jack is an easy shot; but, as his flights are usually short, he stands at any time but a poor chance of escape: and yet, be it remembered, he is not altogether to be trifled with, for though, like the woodcock, he will now and then allow you to have three or four fair shots at him, yet, like him, he will ultimately take the hint and fly away in good earnest. When you have marked him down, take care he does not rise and take a second flight, or run, and afterwards get up behind you.

The great or solitary snipe, in this country at least, is always found alone, as its name implies, and, besides the great difference in size and weight, the distinctions between it and the common snipe consist in the shortness of the bill and legs, resembling those of the lesser woodcock, in the dark bearing of the breast and belly, which, in the common snipe, are white, and in having white feathers in its tail, which it spreads when rising. As the solitary, like the jack, usually lies closer than the common snipe, makes no noise when sprung, and flies low, straight, slow, and tolerably steady—except for the surprise it occasions, and the anxiety to kill it—it presents a much easier shot than the common one. Doubtless, it is a rare, a very rare bird, and yet I suspect is more frequently shot and sent to the kitchen than noticed. In the course of a sporting career, by no means limited, I have bagged hundreds of snipes, yet I never saw but three *solitaries* alive, or shot but one. Since the above was written I have seen a fourth, which was shot on the 9th of September, 1839, on Bordley Moor, near

Malham Tarn, in Yorkshire, by Henry Dearden, Esq., of Chapel House, near Skipton, in Craven; this bird, which weighed rather more than eight ounces and a half, was the fattest of the kind I ever beheld; indeed I never saw a bird of any kind so fat—a circumstance corroborated by Mr. Reid, of Doncaster, to whom it was sent for preservation, who declared that "he found it so *loaded* with *fat*, that, had a cotton wick been run through it, it would have burned like a lamp." Oh! reader, what a light to have lighted a poor scribbler on *shooting* subjects! What lucubrations might not have been expected, in moments of inspiration, in the seclusion of solitude, from this genuine oil of *solitary* snipe. Read this, Reid, I beseech thee, and tell, if thou canst, what mischief dire thou hast wrought, in having disembodied this monster snipe, and left me to grope my way amid the dimness of common oil, or the faint glimmerings of mutton lights. My swan quill has had but a moment's repose, and now a letter has just come in from Mr. H. Dearden himself, announcing the fall of "a second double snipe"—oh! is there not a four-fold sweetness in "a second double snipe?"—to his gun, "quite as fat as the former!" It never rains but it pours: at the same time his eye and finger act in most beautiful harmony; and with perfect ease to himself he can walk over as much ground in one day as many shooters can in two.

The common, or full snipes, like woodcocks, are birds of passage, and like them, too, visit us in the autumn, and return to the continent in the spring; but the numbers of the former, which remain with us to breed, very far exceed those of the latter; indeed, some of the former may be said to be natives of this country; and though much more generally spread over it than woodcocks, are, like them, far more numerously dispersed in Ireland than in Great Britain. It is said that the foreigner may be distinguished from the

English-bred snipe by the plumage on his breast, which is of a much darker brown; and, certainly, this distinction is observable enough among full-grown snipes, whether the conjecture be or be not correct.

A snipe is said to be a good bird whenever you can get it; but it is unsportsmanlike to shoot one before the 12th of August, when a few are generally to be met with on the moors; they are, however, comparatively but indifferent eating till November, when they get very fat. The greatest number of these birds arrive in this country about the end of October, when they are pretty generally sprinkled at first, but soon become more confined to the moors and regular snipe-grounds—as marshes, meres, cars, and sedgy pastures. As the swamps, bogs, and plashes of water on the high moors, are the first to freeze and to be covered with snow, the snipes do not remain long there; but it is only on the advent of very severe weather that they resort numerously to the sides of rivers and "warm springs, where the rills continue open, and run with a gentle stream," those being then the only places which their long bills can penetrate in search of food.

Previous to their final departure for the Continent in March, they collect together, in large flocks, in the fens and marshes contiguous to the eastern coast, but *then* "lie *very* light;" indeed, the snipe, naturally a wary and vigilant bird, is nearly always so when in company.

The rapid march of agricultural science very justly insisting upon thorough drainage as the foundation of all other improvements, has so far disturbed these birds and circumscribed their haunts, that they are now very rarely to be found in any considerable numbers except in comparatively a few favourite resorts, such as Stilton Fen; Acle, in Norfolk; the Essex Marshes; Morden Cars, in the county of Durham; Dartmoor, in Devonshire, &c.; and even some of these, from

the cause just assigned, are every year becoming less and less favourable abodes for snipes. Hence, nineteen shooters in twenty must be content with the few they may casually raise in beating for other game—a real good day's snipe-shooting being only here and there to be had.

At the same time, these birds, even upon ground naturally the best suited to them, are never to be calculated upon to a certainty, being "here to-day and gone to-morrow," as my Uncle Toby says upon another and a graver occasion. From sudden changes in the wind, the weather, or both, they migrate in flocks during the season from one part of the kingdom to another, when, occasionally, some fortunate sportsman falls in with a whole gathering, and does wonders among them. A notable instance occurred in January 1840, when Charles Morewood, Esq., of Alfreton Park, Derbyshire, shot, in one day, in Codnor Park, no fewer than fifty-four snipes, and bagged them all but eleven or twelve; a day's execution unequalled in British Sporting Annals. What *more would* Morewood desire?

Good snipe-ground, however, is nothing less than good snipe-ground; and if these fickle birds desert it on a change of weather, their return may yet be as confidently looked for with the veering of the weathercock, unless frost prevail.

It is an excellent plan in a good snipe, wild-fowl, or golden plover country, to have agents to furnish you with the earliest intelligence of their arrival, either by special messenger or by letter. The pole-bearer, on a sniping excursion, may sometimes be found "a fit and proper person" to employ on such occasions; some Maddison, of Croydon—some Wolff, of Quy.

Taking sportsmen in general, and good shots in particular, snipe-shooting will be found a very favourite pursuit; and, indeed, where the birds are plentiful, it is excellent diversion.

My own snipe-shooting career commenced at a very early period, nor could I now, with truth, assert that in heart I love it less; albeit—

> "Years steal fire from the mind, as vigour from the limb,
> And life's enchanting cup but sparkles near the brim."

But though so many unite in the praises of snipe-shooting, in no sport, perhaps, exists there a greater discrepancy of opinion as to the best mode of doing the thing. One says, *one* dog; another, no *dog*—alleging that "every man is ugly enough to frighten up a snipe." One is for a light gun, and No. 10. One swears by "*just* one ounce and a quarter of No. 8 shot;" another cries, "Pshaw! No. 7 for snipes all the world over." Some are for snap, some for deliberate, and some (none the unwisest they) for catch-him-as-catch-can shooting. Some would range up, some down wind, and some both ways. Some think the snipe the easiest, others the most difficult of shots. Some would use a double, others a single gun for snipes and so forth.

That many who are, at the least, pretty good shots at other game, find discouraging difficulties in snipe-shooting, is certain, else why do they "give it up?" And, in my humble opinion, after all, take one time with another, snipe-shooting is one of the best tests—if not the severest—of the marksman's skill; and for this reason in particular—because the flight of the bird is so variable, according to the state of the weather, that it is difficult, if not impossible, to lay down specific instructions for shooting it, and still more so to follow them. On a warm, cloudy, and rather windy day for instance—especially if an east, or even a north wind—a man shall find snipes as tame and easy to kill as young partridges in September; they shall get up deliberately, and fly straight away at their leisure, or, if they rise, shall not be full of their antics. On

the morning following, the weather has changed, there is a white frost, and a still, bright day, the snipes dart off from the margin of the sedgy rill—with a velocity very much resembling that of an arrow just released from a well-drawn bow—at twenty-five or thirty yards distance from you, and by the time you can well catch sight of Mr. "scape," he is upon the "twist-about, wheel-about, and do just so." You are to "down with him before he begins his evolutions," a maxim (of Colonel Hawker's, I believe) often repeated, and a very good one too. Now I do not mean to assert the impossibility of following this advice, because any good shot may follow it with success, at times, and some almost unerringly; but I do assert that on such days the snipe presents a more difficult shot than any other game presents, rising in the open, at a similar distance; so much so, that even the very best of marksmen will now and then be foiled by it. *Ergo*—snipe-shooting is at once the easiest and the most difficult of all shooting, according as the weather happens to be.

A single pointer, well-accustomed to snipes, is all you require, and when they will not lie to the dog, he is better taken up, or kept at heel, than left to range at large; when you must be ready with your gun, and walk them up. A slow, steady dog, is infinitely the best for this sport; but I have not the same objection to hunting a young dog, occasionally, among snipes, that some have, as, in my opinion, a dog is all the better for being early accustomed to the haunts of all sorts of game. A dead point at a wisp of snipes forms, at any time, an agreeable interlude to any other kind of shooting.

In boggy ground, which not only "quivers to your step," but would *take you in*, a dog is absolutely indispensable, as *he*, especially if a well-broke, and good retrieving water-spaniel, would run at his ease, and spring snipes and wild-fowl where *you* would "quake to tread." On these occasions walk

slowly, and keep a good look-out—the gunner's pair of *small* mud-boards would often be found extremely useful here, as they prevent your sinking, render walking easier, give you a steadier bearing, and enable you to turn quicker than when up to the ankles or knees in a quagmire.

Snipes lie best in windy weather, when the shooter, it is said, should always be down wind, as the birds, when sprung, generally face it, and thus present finer, and often cross shots; but in boisterous weather, though their flight be slower, it is more irregular, and, therefore, the aim is more difficult to take. Some recommend hunting up-wind, and heading the dog wide at a point, instead of walking up in the usual way; but the birds will rarely allow of such liberty being taken with them; to say nothing of fresh birds being thus disturbed. With a scientific *snipe*-dog—*i. e.*, one who, on your walking down-wind, quarters his ground regularly before you, with his nose in the wind, making short turns from right to left, at thirty or forty yards on each side of you, there is no plan equal to walking with the wind; but with a dog not so highly accomplished, I nearly always prefer taking the contrary direction; but then I use Eley's cartridge, No. 7.

As the flight of snipes is so rapid, and, at the same time, often so tortuous, if the shooter mean to get doublets he must fire the first barrel extremely quick, unless, indeed, the birds lie unusually well; but at a single bird he can, if he please, afford himself a little more time, unless that bird rise wild. The critical crisis, or *punctum temporis*, at which you should, in this latter instance, endeavour to fire, is just when the bird is reaching that distance where the shot will have the widest spread, consistent with the proper degree of closeness, for pelting down a bird so small as a snipe; and which, of course, will vary materially, according as you may use loose shot or cartridges.

When snipes rise from a river's side, on a frosty morning, at the commencement of severe weather, I have generally found them in their most evolutionary humour. The finest snipes I ever shot, some of them weighing four ounces and a half, were sprung in this way, one December, from under the banks of the river Eden, in Cumberland; so fat were some of them that they split in falling.

The common opinion, that the slightest touch of a shot is sufficient to bring down this dappled bird, is utterly destitute of foundation, as you may, occasionally, shoot absolutely through it, with one or more pellets of snipe-shot, and shall afterwards watch it, till it fly out of sight—though it may then drop to rise no more; at the same time, when a snipe has been fired at, and marked down, yet does not rise, he must be carefully sought for, as he may be dead, wounded, or have run from the spot.

Snipes are often killed with large shot, when they spring up before the sportsman where he least expects them, and when he is beating for larger birds; and it is even worth while to chance a shot at them, if within a moderate distance, unless the shooter be afraid thereby of disturbing other game; and where these delicious chances are wont to occur, the general shooter will find his account in taking out with him a few of Eley's cartridges, No. 7, or a small shot-pouch, half full of No. 7, loose; otherwise, he may have to fire three or four shots, where one would have sufficed—a waste of both time and ammunition, to say nothing of the annoyance of being thus bothered and delayed by a bit of a *snip*.

Whatever ground you have, used by snipes, try it well, for you will never find too many; and if you try it a second time on the same day, at an interval of a few hours, you will often be repaid for your trouble; as these birds, after having flown out of sight, are very apt to return to the old ground in

the course of the day, to say nothing of "fresh arrivals," or what you may have previously missed.

Indeed, when snipes have been but little disturbed, they will sometimes return to the very ground where they were sprung and fired at, by the time the shooter has reloaded. They first make a circle or two round him, and then, provided he keep quite still, and especially if he drop on one knee in good time,—

> "Unwilling to forsake their favourite haunts,
> They skim, then dart with rapid wing at once
> Among the rushes."

It has often been remarked that there are certain localities to all appearance most favourable as haunts for snipes, in which they are never found. The case is precisely similar with the woodcock. Most probably the disagreeable taste of the ground, or of the food they extract from it, is the cause of offence: for with bills so finely organized, and possessing the senses of smelling, of touching especially, and not improbably of tasting, in so exquisite a degree, no wonder these delicate epicures should be so *recherché* in the selection of their food.

Where snipes may be expected to lie pretty well, No. 7, loose, in the first barrel, and No. 7, Eley, in the second, will be the best—otherwise, the latter in both barrels; or, when very wild, No. 6, Eley, in the second barrel. In a wild country I have repeatedly shot six, seven, and, on one occasion, ten couple of snipes in a day, with the last-named loading, when, I am quite confident, loose shot would have proved all but a total failure. In no shooting whatever, in my humble opinion, is the superiority of Eley's cartridge over loose shot more triumphantly conspicuous than in snipe-shooting with No. 7, especially in windy weather.

When snipes show a disposition to spring wild, keep your

eye well forward, and fire the instant they top the ling, or the reeds, taking care to shoot at an elevation proportioned to the distance; for a wild-springing snipe, like a wild pigeon from the trap, generally takes a direct course, at first, and is ever on the rise; if he present an oblique, or a cross shot, you must regulate your aim accordingly, and shoot well forward. A stout single-gun (say a nine or ten gauge), from seven and a half to eight pounds weight—according as it can be used with perfect ease, with Eley's No. 7—is by far the best instrument of destruction in this case.

RED DEER SHOOTING.

"From distant isles a Chieftain came,
The joys of Ronald's halls to find;
To chase with him the dark brown game,
That bound o'er Albion's hills of wind."

Although, unfortunately, I have never been a participator in the truly noble sport of deer-stalking, still, with the reader's permission, I will venture a word or two upon it, especially as the bare thinking or writing about it is nearly as agreeable as the actual enjoyment of almost any other description of shooting. Besides, though unable to offer my readers any instructions grounded upon my own personal experience, I can yet tell what some of them, possibly, may be glad to learn; namely, where they may gain information of utility and interest on the subject; and, furthermore, can relate to them, what was told to me, one fine morning, in "Norland's Shooting Ground," by a noble lord, who has, perhaps, had

as much practice, attended with as much success, in this sort of shooting, in the Highlands, as any man in Her Majesty's dominions.

Like a worthy friend of mine, who well knew the nature of deer-stalking, I am not a great reader of novels; but one there is which every sportsman ought to peruse;—namely, "The Smugglers," in three vols., 8vo., by Mr. Cooper; a beautifully written work (at least, as far as I am a judge) throughout, and in which deer-stalking, and other Highland scenes, are most happily, graphically, and faithfully delineated.

Then, more recently, we have a very interesting and practical account of roe-shooting, in "The Moor and the Loch;" as also a formal, and, I believe, a very able and original treatise, entitled, "The Art of Deer-stalking, by William Scrope, Esq., F.L.S.," and who has himself, I understand (for I have yet the pleasure to come, of perusing his work) largely participated—and "it a' lies i' that"—in the scenes he has attempted to portray.

The following is what I recollected of his lordship's conversation, and as I booked it on the evening of the same day on which it took place, I believe it to have been, at the least, substantially correct.

"On one occasion," said his lordship, "it having been determined that the men should drive up the herd of deer from a favourite Highland glen, myself and my friend, Lord ***, resolved on planting ourselves at a suitable distance from each other, on the higher ground, and to wait their passing. Unfortunately the driving commenced sooner than we had expected, and as I was forming an ambush of stones to conceal myself, and had not more than half finished it, suddenly I heard stones rolling half way down the hill, when, casting my eye in the direction whence the sound proceeded, I caught a

glimpse of his antlers, as he was rising the hill. Down I laid me, instanter; and, pulling off my rifle cover, as best I could in this position, awaited his arrival at the top, which he had no sooner reached than he stood staring wildly on each side. I well knew that no time was to be lost. [A man should not have nerves of aspen delicacy for an occasion like this.] I fired, he made a snort, and instantly bounded off with the fleetness of the wind: he might have gone a hundred yards when he passed close to my friend, whose gun being wet, for it was raining heavily at the time, fortunately for my credit, missed fire, as almost immediately afterwards, the animal sprang up and fell backwards, lifeless; the ball had penetrated his heart! He weighed nineteen stones. Though shot even in the heart itself, and the blood spouting out at the side, red deer will run to the very last. They are at once the *gamest* and the most cunning of animals. In illustration of the latter fact I may name, when wounded, their keeping a dog at bay in the water, till he has exhausted himself by barking, and has lapped his skin full, when out goes the stag comparatively fresh, whilst his pursuer finds that, like a spaniel in chase of a hare, the farther he goes, the farther he is left behind. When you hear the dog barking, you have still to use the same artifice, and to approach the deer as cunningly as at first, creeping up with the same stealthy caution, and then pop a ball into him; when the dog, always wide awake to the shot, springs forward instantly, and seizes him by the throat. The deer are powerless in the water."

In further and more desultory conversation, I understood his lordship to say, that "the deer are fondest of the grass of which the sheep rob them; that they are much disturbed by the shepherds' dogs; are very fond of potatoe fields, of which they make sad havoc at night; when conscious of their own safety, they are of easy approach. When hit in the

belly they swell, and are unable to run, yet still are extremely fierce. When the fore leg of a stag is broken, two of the swiftest greyhounds are unable to keep pace with him, and he always makes for water, but when one hind leg is broken, he is certain to break the other in running!" For this last named singular fact his lordship appeared at a loss to account. Is it from the additional weight and strain upon the tendon of the leg which is sound?

For the loan of the ancient brass collar, whence the annexed cut is taken, I have to express my best acknowledgments to that "ryghte worthie" Lancashire squire, and good sportsman, James Dearden, Esq., of Rochdale.

The favourite dog who wore the collar, tradition relates, was a remarkably fine and faithful deer-hound, called *Ranger*, from his boundless range and disposition to roam; it being no uncommon thing for this game animal to be seen alone during the day, chasing a deer over the moors, twenty or thirty miles from the Old Hall; but to which he, notwithstanding, invariably returned, to resume his post as the vigilant sentinel of the night.

A wandering Dog my Self I call Going I know not whither
My Master lives at Bamford Hall I pray Conduct me thither
To William Bamford Esqr 1744

FALLOW-DEER SHOOTING.

Compared with the Highland chase, the shooting of fallow-deer in a park is as wild-duck shooting on the ocean to the destruction of tame ducks on a mill-pond; and yet the pursuit of the parkers may not be a bad preparatory entry to that of those nobler animals, the ten-tined stags of the Highland forest. I mean, of course, to a perfect novice in deer-shooting; for in a large park, well-stocked with deer, and particularly where you confine yourself to shooting from the shoulder only, and without any rest, the shooting of deer will be impossible, unless recourse be had sometimes to stalking stratagems similar to those which are found so essentially necessary to success in the chase of the wary antlered monarchs of the north.

As I had the shooting of all the bucks required for two seasons, in one of the largest parks in England, and where the herd of deer amounted to 800 in number, for the information of the uninitiated I may here state a few particulars respecting park-shooting.

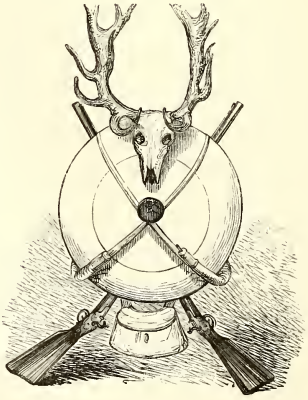
Buck-shooting commences in July and terminates in September, when the rutting season commences, and they of course, are out of season; then the heavers—or castrated males—succeed; and, lastly, the does; but the shooting of the bucks is alone worthy the attention of the sportsman.

Before a novice undertakes buck-shooting, it is highly essential for him to make himself acquainted with the respective ages of the bucks, as well as to be able to judge at a distance, by the eye, of their condition. To be prime and fit for killing, a buck ought to be seven years old, and thick fat

on the haunches, in which last respect they vary considerably, especially at the commencement of the season. A thin buck is worth nothing. The size and form of the horns are the distinguishing criteria of their age, which the young shooter may soon make himself acquainted with, by a little attentive observation, after having previously digested "a lecture on heads" from some intelligent park-keeper.

A double is far preferable to a single-barreled rifle for fallow-deer shooting; as well because two bucks have sometimes to be shot on the same day, and the same herd will frequently stand a second shot, as that the same deer, when wounded, will sometimes need another ball, it being otherwise not always safe to approach them. The most vulnerable parts are the brain, the spine, the heart, and *circa præcordia*. But to do the business in style, a buck should always be shot in the brain. There are three positions in which a buck may be thus shot; *viz.*, when facing you, when standing sideways, or when standing with his back to you, of which the first is generally considered the worst, and the last the best chance; but, for my own part, I like the first as well or better than the last, and the second better than either, and in which case you should shoot exactly between the eye and the root of the ear, taking care not to shoot too low, when you will only break his jaw. In shooting at the heart, your aim must be behind the fore arm, and rather low down. The best time for a shot is when their attention is steadfastly fixed; as when gazing in your face, or at any passing object, otherwise their heads are but too apt to be in constant motion, especially during sultry weather, when they appear to be vastly tormented by insects. When a buck has fallen, the next step is to cut his throat, which is effected by means of a very sharp dirk-knife, as buckskin is well known to be of the toughest. Iron spikes driven into the trunks, rustic ladders,

and other contrivances to facilitate mounting into the trees, are used by park-keepers, who, for safety, to avoid being scented by the deer, and for expedition's sake, usually shoot from these elevations. There is also another and a very proper reason for having recourse to this expedient, which is that, when more openly pursued, deer are much more difficult of approach, and that, when heated by overdriving, they are in a bad state for killing, and, consequently, the flavour of the venison is thereby deteriorated.



HARE-SHOOTING.

"Inter quadrupedes gloria prima lepus."—Mart.

"Ex venatione maxime lepus."—Cels.

He who shoots a hare in a good open coursing country, must expect reproaches from "the still small voice of conscience," and no honied compliments from the still louder one of his neighbours; and as for shooting hares on a public coursing ground, or on lands thereto belonging, it is as bad as being a vulpecide in a fox-hunting country, which leaves nothing more to be said. But am I, situated in a closely fenced district, to refrain from shooting hares on my own grounds, or where I have permission from others? No! no! here, I conceive, rests the distinction betwixt the sporting propriety and impropriety of shooting hares. In countries abounding in small enclosures, thick fences, plantations, and woods, you may run greyhounds after hares, but can have no coursing. Unless, therefore, there be a clever little pack of beagles in the neighbourhood, or a pack of harriers, with a decided paucity of hares—for too many are as inimical to hare-hunting as too few—I should certainly shoot them; at all events, occasionally. If my dogs stand at a hare in yonder field, and especially that young dog for the first time, am I to tantalize him and to rob myself of a shot by letting her go? Again I say—no! no! I shall feel real pleasure in sparing the hares, but it must be in a different country. One of our best sporting authorities tells us "it is not considered unhandsome or unsportsmanlike to shoot any game found on

land over which a gentleman has the right of sporting, notwithstanding such land adjoins a preserve. If the proprietor of the latter be desirous that hares should not be shot, he should pursue the give-and-take system, which is almost universally adopted by gentlemen sportsmen." Some philosophers contend (and who shall deny the truth of the doctrine?) that in a reduction of his wants man finds much of his real happiness to consist. Juvenal tells us that "when Alexander saw the great inhabitant (Diogenes) in his tub, made of baked earth, he perceived how much happier the man who should desire nothing than he who should demand for himself the whole world."

> "Sensit Alexander, testâ cum vidit in illâ
> Magnum habitatorem, quanto felicior hic, qui
> Nil cuperet, quàm qui totam sibi posceret orbem."—Juv. xiv. 311.

A useful moral lesson, I trow, to some (for there are many honourable exceptions) among our great game preservers, who, not content with their own vast demesnes, and the lease of various other extensive tracts of country, to the entire exclusion of lesser sportsmen, would each fain reserve a whole county to themselves to sport over, and that once gained, would still sigh for "the great globe itself," *totam sibi posceret orbem.*

As respects the haunts of the hare, hares are to be found on every description of soil, and in every sort of covert, and this, too, sometimes, on the same day. This is considered a very likely place for a hare, and that as a sure find; yet, after long and fruitless seeking, in favourite places, puss, now and then, sets all the knowing ones at defiance, and starts up, like a spectre, where nobody is dreaming of her, and where nobody could have *s'pposed* a hare would lie! "How remarkably odd," quoth the tyro, "but certainly it is a hare if ever I saw one! Believe me, though, I should just as soon have

expected to have found one in my dog-kennel as in such a spot as this!" But though this ubiquitous and roving propensity attach to the hare probably in a greater degree than to other descriptions of game, still, like them, she usually has her favourite resorts, according to the season. Let none of my juvenile readers, therefore, in crossing a rough, dry fallow, in the month of September, be so taken by surprise as to be unable to make ready, present, and fire, if from those dull clods should suddenly jump up, large as life, a great, banging, old hare. Nor in walking in that deep aftermath, within a land or two of the fence, let him be overcome with trepidation, should such a thing as a young hare spring up close under his good young nose. Of course he will keep Don from the yet standing corn, and particularly from those beans, for fear he should find half the game in the country collected there. But the potatoes, and even the turnips, will now often furnish a hare, and especially a leveret; for let me not mislead my young readers into the belief that I am an advocate for trespassing in uncut corn or beans; quite the reverse. All law, human and divine, forbids any one doing wilful injury to another, and no one can doubt that these crops are shaken and trodden down both by dogs and men; besides, the dogs are apt to get lost for some time, and to "stab" or to spring game, which, if brought down by the gun, is frequently very difficult to find, often totally lost, and occasions much trampling down of the crop in the "seek dead." On the whole, this sort of shooting is most unsportsmanlike and unsatisfactory: it spoils your dogs; stings your conscience; and keeps you perpetually on the fidgets, for fear of a startling hollo-o-o! from the justly offended owner. But when the crop is almost a total failure, and barely worth mowing, if a covey alight therein, but few farmers, on permission being asked, would refuse entrance

to the shooter; when, should the birds have dispersed, he may, with one steady dog, probably pick up the better half of them, and, for a young hand, this is most excellent practice.

It is surprising how game of all kinds, and hares and partridges especially, will keep to standing corn, removing from field to field, as the scythe or the sickle compels them, to seek fresh shelter; but, when all is down, other places of concealment must be sought for, and then it is that the hares betake themselves to the coverts and hedges, to fallows or to fog, or sit at the bottom or sides of dry drains, ditches, grips, &c., generally smothered in long grass; and hence after a deluge of rain, which causes a drip from the trees and hedges, and fills the ditches, you find hares lying out, particularly in shorn wheat stubbles, where you had in vain ranged for them all the former part of the season, wondering "what the deuce can have got all the hares!" and abusing those innocent poachers for having snared them in the tracks in the standing corn, just before it was ripe for cutting—a most wholesale murderous plan. On the return of dry weather, the main body of the hares again repairs to covert; when the frosty nights set in, inducing the fall of—

——"the sere and yellow leaf,"

partly disturbed and intimidated by its constant falling, and partly from the incipient exposure which this destitution of foliage occasions, Mrs. Puss leaves covert and begins to show herself in good earnest in the open fields. Then it is that a regular clearance of all crops has taken place; that the shooter, for the first time, begins to see his game; that the air becomes cool, agreeable, and bracing; the scenery picturesque and rich in autumnal tints; the ground softened for your dogs' feet and for your own; the scent good; the game of all kinds well-grown; and, in a word, the shooting in perfection. When

I was a young shooter, I thought and acted as a young shooter, nor would I have my juvenile friends act otherwise; but when I became a veteran sportsman, I shot but little, and never took any real pleasure in field or wood shooting, until the fall of the leaf, when snipes, cocks, and cock pheasants, as well as birds and quadrupeds, might be expected to afford an agreeable variety and *additamentum* to the day's diversion. At this period, hares may rise almost anywhere in the shooter's beat, though long stubbles, particularly wheat and bean stubbles, are among the best places to look for them. I believe they are not often found in the fields in which they feed, and less in clover, or seed fields, than in others; beds of rushes or thistles, tufts or patches of grass, furze, and thorn-bushes, dry heather—

> "The thick entangled broom;
> Of the same friendly hue, the wither'd fern,"

are also among their winter quarters; close under walls, on the moors, are favourite resorts of hares, known but too well to every poacher; cloughs, old pits, and the sides of ponds, frequently produce a hare, and many a bouncing old lady has lain unsuspected and unmolested for many a day, half buried in a manure heap; young wheat, when pretty well above ground, is rarely without hares; but take the season through, except in rainy weather, or in wet situations—and not always then—old ploughed fallows are, perhaps, to be backed against any other sort of ground for holding hares; and a range of thirty or forty yards distance from the hedges, as every old courser can attest, is preferable to the rest of the field, be its size almost what it may. Sometimes, particularly in boisterous weather, the hares betake themselves, as if by common consent, to covert, especially to the hedgerows, when you will not find one in the open. Three o'clock in the morning is

about the usual time for hares taking a seat, and the choice of it for the day following, I imagine, depends upon the state of the weather at that early hour; for it is well known that hares, like many of our nobility and gentry, have more than one seat, and like them, too, are wont to remove from one to another, according to the season and state of the weather. It appears to me that they seat themselves according to the state of the weather at "coming on time," as the poachers call it, rather than that they foresee, as some contend, the changes about to take place during the day; for what sportsman of experience has not, in the midst of a heavy shower of sleet or rain, observed them deserting their seats in the open field at mid-day, and stealing off to covert, with their ears close down? In wet weather they prefer high ground; in dry weather, the valleys; and in mountainous districts, forsake the heath and grass, and repair to the lowlands and woods on the first heavy fall of snow. In February and March they are to be found in low, moist situations, frequently in pairs, and seldom far apart.

If you see a fresh-looking form, or fresh scratched-up earth, in any part of a field, look close, for puss will very probably be upon another form, not far distant, unless she have stolen away, unawares, from the one you have found; but this remark appertains the rather to the courser than to the shooter, though it may prove useful to the latter, as some modern shooters accord with the ancient Romans in considering the hare, as my mottoes to this chapter import, the best venison.

As regards the best size of shot for hare-shooting, the sportsman will generally take his chance with whatever sized shot he may happen to have in his gun; and as the shots at winged game usually preponderate, will, of course, use smaller shot than would be employed, were he professedly in pursuit

of hares only; but as hares, on account of their superior size, are obviously the most exposed of all game to the full effect of a charge, and, at the same time, will go away with a vast deal of shot, they ought not to be fired at beyond forty yards when crossing, or thirty yards when running straight. I speak, here, of loose shot. How often have I seen hares, which had just before been fired at, at fifty or sixty paces distant, and by good shots, and the best of guns, caught, after as good and as long, though not, perhaps, quite so quick a course as Mr. Goodlake would wish to see, and found their skins perforated with shot, which, in some instances, had penetrated the flesh, though not deep enough to insure immediate destruction. At the same time, a lingering death, or, at best, "a painful illness, and a tardy recovery," must have awaited them, had they not been caught in this unsportsmanlike manner. In my juvenile days I knew an old shooter who was a sad sinner against the above rule; he would fire at a hare with No. 7 (the size he always shot with, except No. 8, for snipes), at even sixty yards distance; but upon my remonstrating with him on the cruelty and absurdity of it, his reply was ever the same:—"They are in more danger than I, and I like to have a crack at 'em." What experienced shooter, too, has not occasionally picked up, at a hedgerow, or a gate, a dead hare, which, from the fresh stains of blood, and her being yet warm, left not a doubt on his own mind of her being the identical quadruped he fired at, twenty minutes before, in that wheat stubble on the hill, nearly half a mile off? Many a fine hare thus becomes food for carrion-crows and magpies, which, had she been shot at, at a proper distance, would have made a rare soup, or a jug.

For my own part, I would seldom shoot at a hare with shot smaller than No. 4, and never would I have a less size in the second barrel, except for snipes, woodcocks, or other

small and tender birds; in all other cases I detest small shot, and ever have done. I hate small shot, that is to say, Nos. 7 and 8, and even 6: first, because, after September, when birds become strong on the wing, it will only kill—save mere chance shots—at short distances, and large shot will do the same; whilst, at long distances, the latter either misses altogether, or kills clean, and, comparatively, but seldom wounds. Secondly, small shot riddles the game so, that, when it comes to table, it is full of mustard-seed, to say nothing of the shattered splinters of bones, and the livid and forbidding appearance of the bird, in every part. I have both seen and received *battûe* pheasants shamefully mangled by small shot; in short, not worth the carriage. What skill can be exercised, or what pleasure can be derived from blowing up a beautiful bird?—then dispatching him, with three or four more of his brother martyrs, and an old hare, full of dust shot, as "a handsome basket of game," to a friend 200 miles distant, where the cargo arrives, green as grasshoppers, and, if detained a short time on the road, perhaps nearly as *lively*—five or six shillings carriage to pay, and an ounce of No. 7 patent glazed shot to eat, in every pheasant—it's a monstrous *hard* case. This mutilation, however, is often the effect of shooting at too short distances with larger shot. I once saw a hare shot fairly in two, by being fired at when within a few yards only of the gun's muzzle. A man, shooting for a wager, may find some excuse for discharging the whole contents of his fowling-piece into the body of an unfortunate hare or pheasant, as, with him, the sole object is to destroy the greatest number he can, in the shortest space of time, and without any regard to the manner: but when gentlemen go out for mere recreation, there can be no excuse whatever for not allowing all game fair trigger law. And if the young shooter discover, as he will, that, in shooting in covert, he must sometimes fire either

at very short distances, or not get a shot at all, it will be essential for him either to acquire the knack of shooting on one side his game, or to let it go free; the latter is the plan I would recommend, except in the case of a woodcock likely to fly out of bounds, and who, within forty-eight hours, may, perhaps, be regaling himself in an Irish bog.

In my opinion no person who goes out for the exclusive purpose of shooting hares, has any business with shot less than No. 2 or 3. One of these in the first, and No. 1, or B, Eley, in the second barrel, are at no time bad pepper for hares.

Shooting a hare on her seat is not considered sportsmanlike; it may be excusable, occasionally, in a very young shot, but stamps an older one as a pot-hunter, or a game vendor, for the love of coin; some of these older ones will tell you that they "only do such a thing just for once in a way, when they really want a hare;" *i. e.* whenever they see one!

If a shooter approach near enough to a hare on her form—and that approach must be circuitous, not directly toward her, or she will instantly start from it—to kill her, let him put her up and knock her over; a hare when running, especially crossways, is a very easy shot, has at best but a poor chance of escaping, and against a double barrel none whatever, provided she start within fifteen or twenty yards of the shooter. Besides, stationary objects are not always such easy shots as they are generally imagined to be; and an old hare, crouched close in a deep seat, is not so readily hit as some may imagine. I have had many a hearty laugh at young shooters, and some old ones too, who, under such circumstances, have "erred wide of the mark," when puss has jumped up and gone kicking and corkily bounding away at her leisure.

In crossing a field where the lands lie in high ridges, if a hare start up, and take a direct course from you, wherever

you fire at her it should be as she is rising, and about midway between the furrow and the ridge; if you wait till she reach the top of the ridge, her head and pole, the most vulnerable parts, are shielded by her haunches. For a similar reason, on level ground, when a hare runs straight from you, say at thirty yards distance, always shoot a little high, that is, a little over her back.

As, however, there are exceptions to all rules, so may we find one for shooting a hare on her seat. In case, therefore, the young shooter promise to kill her, he may be allowed, for once in a way, to take his pea rifle, and pink her as she sits; he must hit her in the brain, between the eye and the root of the ear. Thus will she be clean shot, and be fit for a civic feast or a political dinner.

When a hare is coming blindly cantering towards you, stand perfectly still, and when within shot, give a shrill whistle, some motion of alarm, or both, when she will stop for a moment, and then, most probably, turn to the right,

left, or right about; catch the auspicious moment, and floor her: this you may then easily do; but if, when her *phisog.* is advancing towards yours, you fire at her at a fair distance, you may, very probably, wound her only; and if you allow her to approach nearer to you before you fire, you will likely enough pulverize her, especially if loaded with Nos. 6 or 7.

The shooting of hares ought to terminate with the shooting season. Leverets may be killed at any time, but it is a pity to shoot them before they are pretty well grown.

According to naturalists we have but two kinds of hares, the common, and the Alpine or white hare,* which, as some assert, takes shelter in the fissures of rocks. I have shot hares in September, in the Highlands, which, at first sight, nine Englishmen in ten would have pronounced to be rabbits, and which, but for the greater length of the ears—though these appeared much shorter than those of the common hare—and redness of the eyes, were very difficult to distinguish from a large rabbit; the colour of the two being then precisely similar, though I was assured that these hares would turn perfectly white in the winter.

The sportsman, however, contends, if not for more than two sorts of hares, at the least for distinctions among them. Hence we familiarly hear of the mountain or down, the field or enclosure, the marsh and woodland hare, not forgetting him of rambling propensity, the vagrant hare or "travelling jack," who lives here and there and all over, disdainful of "sweet home," to whom all places are alike, but who never remains long enough in any one to "gain a settlement."

* Black rabbits are common enough, but a black hare is as rare as a black swan; yet, not long ago, "as Captain Alexander Hassard, of Bawnboy House, with other gentlemen, were coursing on Cummis Mountain, they killed a hare perfectly black, with only a white ring round the eyes, and a little white on the nose."

The surest sign of a real good hare is her sitting remote from any covert; but these wandering gents, secure in their own strength, take up their uncertain abode, in great measure, as chance may direct, bidding contemptuous defiance to all the world, and all the dogs therein. Happy, thrice happy, the huntsman who falls in with such a hare; if he don't lead the merry little pack a dance, none can.

The hare comes to maturity and breeds in her first year, lives six or seven years in a natural, and twice as long in a domesticated state, but, though exceedingly prolific, is inferior to the rabbit in fecundity. Daniel informs us that "a male and female hare were put together by Lord Ribblesdale for a year, when the offspring amounted to *sixty-eight*. A couple of rabbits, enclosed for the same period, produced about *three hundred*."

Proceed we now to *weightier* matters.

When at Cambridge, I recollect some University man shot a hare weighing nine pounds, and this was deemed so "prodigious," that almost everybody went to see her;—and certainly a nine pounder *is* no small hare at any time, or place, and in that part of England especially. I have shot hares east, west, north, and south of *Alma Mater*, but nearly all of them were leverets to such an *alma mater* as this. In my day, the hares about Cambridge were kept in pretty constant exercise; and, I opine, are still seldom permitted to accumulate much superfluous flesh.

The very first shot I ever fired in my native county (Cumberland), astonished me, and also some of "the natives;" it was at a hare which I killed, and which weighed *ten* pounds avoirdupois, and above *due poise*. Doubting the steelyards, I had it brought to scale—but still found full ten pounds of brass requisite to kick the beam against this enormous *lepus*, which certainly was the finest and the reddest hare I ever beheld, and

lengthy and strengthy all over. In the Isle of Man, however, and on some parts of the Earl of Lonsdale's property in Westmoreland, there are hares of from twelve to fourteen pounds in weight. Four years ago, when in the Isle of Man, Mr. Farrant, of Jurby, the greatest landholder, I believe, and the only man who keeps a pack of hounds in the island, told me that he had handled hares, killed there, weighing thirteen pounds. Yet this is nothing compared with the weights of some varieties of tame rabbit, which have been known to exceed twenty pounds.

Some years ago, two distinguished sportsmen, discoursing on our present subject, were found to entertain a difference of opinion as to the respective weights of the hare in a wild state, and the tame rabbit; the one contending that there were hares, in England, of a larger size than any tame rabbit that could be produced, and the other as stoutly maintaining the contrary. At length they agreed, as our countrymen usually do—

"To back their opinions with a wager,"

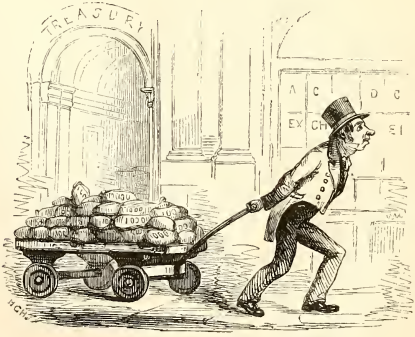
and there and then mutually fixed a certain time and place to produce the animals and decide the bet. The one despatched a letter forthwith to his friend, Mr. Coke,* of Holkham, upon whose noble demesne are, or were supposed to be, some of the heaviest hares in Britain; the other, who happened just then to have been reading Dr. Cox's "Wanderings of Woe," wherein the author, not inaptly, perhaps, designates "The Metropolis of England," as "that scene of *all* that is *great*, and all that is abominable," lost no time in proceeding to town, where, in a dark cellar in Spitalfields, he found one Mr. Simon Shuttleworth, a weaver, who presently, forth from the innermost recesses of his gloomy Tartarus, lugged up "Daniel

* Now the Earl of Leicester.

Lambert,"—full brother in blood to "Champion Dymoke"—his favourite lop-eared buck. With that urbanity and sporting accommodation for which the opulent owner of Holkham is distinguished, every attention was paid to his friend's request; and to be brief, when show day arrived, the biggest hare in Norfolk was not wanting—when both the quadrupeds, of course, were sacrificed to the experiment—the final adjudication leaving the hare in a minority of some pounds.

Shuttleworth, the hero of the hutch, kept Dan's scut as a *hare*-LOOM, and was heard to declare that, though but an operative himself, he was perfectly sure that sometimes labour would exceed capital. At all events, the tame rabbit outweighed the hare, and thus supplied the only instance probably on record, of the first commoner in England having been beaten by the last.

The modern breed of lop-eared rabbits have, I believe, been fed to upwards of twenty pounds in weight.



RABBIT-SHOOTING.

"Brevity is the soul of wit," and quickness is the soul of rabbit-shooting, hence its beauty.

Although I advocate the sporting propriety of shooting hares under certain circumstances, and especially when they are wanted, yet I am decidedly of opinion that, of all game-shooting, that of hares affords, if any at all, the least sport. It is at best somewhat tame and insipid. Not so the shooting of the rabbit; for he is a nimble little fellow, and affords great variety of choice diversion, as well above as under-ground. He may not be, and is not, game in the eye of the law, but he is so in that of the sportsman. Indeed, the rabbit is the only object of sporting pursuit that is persecuted more or less all the year round, although—except it be desirable, as frequently is the case, to reduce their numbers, or to extirpate them entirely, in consequence of their depredations on field crops, or ravages among young plantations—it is pity to destroy any after the close of the shooting season, until the young ones are worth having, which will, probably, be not earlier than the month of June, though some of the forwardest bred form a delicate dish for an invalid as early as the month of April. Rabbits, both wild and tame, are better in flavour, larger in size, and their skins are in better order, from November to the middle or end of January, than at other times; in fact, it is during that brief interval alone that they are "in season."

Every one knows that rabbits are extremely prolific,*

* "Rabbits will breed at six months old, bear seven times annually, and bring five young ones each time;" and "those bred in coverts where the surrounding fields present a choice of food, are more delicious in flavour than any others."—Daniel.

fecund, and alert in their movements; the hare is sometimes, to all appearance, perfectly at her leisure, if not "stiff at starting," but the rabbit always gets upon his legs in a twinkling, and, for a short distance, shows more speed, perhaps, than any other animal. To use a common phrase, he "goes like shot;" and sometimes I have thought, when I have missed him, and could not tell why, *raythe*r quicker. This very velocity alone makes the rabbit by no means an easy shot; but that difficulty is greatly augmented by his flirting, bounding mode of going, and still more so by the meandering or zig-zag course of his tracks which he invariably pursues when he has the opportunity; sometimes darting off suddenly to left or right, whilst you, "good easy man, full surely," are carrying your eye well forward, hoping to succeed better with the second barrel than you did with the first: ha! ha! "no go!" Nothing can be more graphically or correctly delineated than the following poetic rules for rabbit-shooting, from the pen of Mr. Watts:—

"More difficult than hares to hit,
They frequently appear to flit
Like shadows past one;—good, indeed,
Is then the aim that bids them bleed.
If you would see them nicely stopped
In the thick wood, you must adopt
Snap-shooting, for you'll seldom there
Have time to take them full and fair:
E'en lost to view, advance your gun
Quickly to where you think they run;
Regard not grass, nor bush, nor brier,
Through each and all that instant fire.
Bang! it is well—you saw him not,
And yet you've killed him on the spot."*

Many sportsmen, and some naturalists, I believe, are of opinion that the rabbit by nature prefers a seat upon the sur-

* "Remarks on Shooting," p. 109.

face to a subterranean residence, and that the burrow he makes is merely intended as a place of refuge, in case of being roused by man, dog, or other noxious animal, and is, therefore, never tenanted except when he is pretty constantly disturbed. In this latter case, I know from close observation that rabbits do remain under ground all day. From similar experience, though of much earlier date, I have strong reason to imagine that, during very severe weather, they, from choice, frequently inhabit their burrows, which must then be far warmer than a seat exposed to the open air; especially to an animal, an aboriginal of warmer climates, and, therefore, naturally impatient of cold. Even the hare will make a considerable longitudinal excavation underneath the snow when it lies deep upon the ground. Be this as it may, there can be no doubt that the less rabbits are disturbed the more they lie out; and every experienced shooter can attest to their jumping up occasionally, and when least expected, though generally pretty close to the fence, from stubbles, turnips, and that fine white grass so often seen in plantations of a year or two's growth only: thick hedgerows, especially such as have furze or fern growing on their banks, and old, dry, unworked sand or stone pits, whose sides are more or less covered with scrogs, brambles, &c., are favourite resorts of rabbits; but nowhere are they more partial to lying out than among tufts of long grass in any field of old sward adjoining covert, particularly furze, where they afford excellent sport for a gun, and, by the way, sometimes a good short course for a brace of greyhounds, which are thrown ludicrously enough, at times, by the sharp bobbing turns of the agile coney.

As regards the influence of the weather upon rabbits, I have always noted that both before a coming storm, and after rain, especially thunder showers, they are much more eager to see the light than at other times.

Cowper observed something similar in the hare. Thus, in his epitaph on his favourite tame hare, *Tiney*, he tells us—

> "His frisking was at evening hours,
> For then he lost his fear,
> But most before approaching showers,
> Or when a storm drew near."

All animals appear more susceptible of atmospheric changes than man, and yet to him how charmingly delightful it is to inhale that balmy freshness of sweet air which succeeds heavy rain or a grateful shower; at the same time, the moistness, and, therefore, the increased succulence of the herbage may, probably, form no inconsiderable attraction to the ancient indweller of "the stony rocks."

At earliest dawn, and towards the dusk of evening, are good times for shooting rabbits; though, of the two, the morning, perhaps, is generally preferable. After a sultry day in July or August, during the evening, rabbits may be found feeding pretty numerously; but, at that season of the year, by far the best time for shooting them is at break of day; for then not only are they easier of approach, but they are always out in greater numbers, delighting to feed in the cool, and whilst the dew is on the grass. But though rabbits are less shy in a morning than in an evening, from having fed during the night, yet, as all animals are the best for food that are killed when in a state of emptiness, a rabbit shot in the evening, like a wild-duck shot at flight, is all the better on that account. Your best mode, however, of going about this sort of shooting will entirely depend upon situation and other circumstances. For instance, if the ground where the rabbits frequent, be of pretty tolerable extent, you can go regularly round it; and by not being conspicuously dressed, walking slowly, sometimes creeping—don't be nice to a shade, I beg—on your hands and knees, approaching, circuitously, not di-

rectly, looking in an opposite direction, affecting not to see them "at all at all," and ever and anon keeping as much out of sight as you can, you will thus, probably, on such ground, get more shots than by any other means. But I ought to state that it is not enough to walk slowly—you must also tread with as light a step as possible; your foot, as Shakspeare says of "the foot of time," must be noiseless and inaudible."* Use light walking shoes, and not creaking boots: in making your approach, sink slowly and gradually on one knee at times; and cock both barrels before you get within shot, to prevent the tell of the scear from announcing too much. Recollect you have no deaf auditors at these your impressive lectures.

But if the ground be of limited extent, the rabbits few in number, and, above all, if they have been much shot at, they then become extremely shy of showing themselves, and all pop into their burrows the moment they hear a single report of a gun. In this case, to conceal yourself within shot, and wait their coming out, is the best plan, being careful not to harass them too much, or to shoot too often from the same station, but to keep changing about from one part to another.

Where the ground is undulating, or hilly, you may, by attending to the above directions, and by keeping under cover of the brow of a hill, generally come well within shot of them, and make the best of shots. Let me recommend you also, in this case, to reconnoitre your ground at mid-day, and to fix upon such stations, here and there, as command the most extensive view of the holes with the least chance of the rabbits spying you out, and have private marks of your own by which to find these stations when wanted.

And now, with gun in hand, having, by slow but sure degrees, crept softly up to one of these firing stations, don't

* "The snowfall of her fairy foot," says L. E. L.

imagine that all you have to do is to rise up, to fire, and to kill—though an experienced hand, I deny it not, may, perhaps, do all this at times; but, universally, if the object be to make the most of the chance, act thus: if the nature of the station—as at the top of a hill or bank—admit of your shooting from a rest, lie down on your belly, or, at all events, crouch low—push your gun gently and gradually forwards, close to the ground, without showing your head or hand, until you see that it is just far enough for the stock to meet your shoulder; then very gradually and slowly raise your head with hat off, or with cap on harmonizing in colour with the ground you are shooting upon; and when opportunity offers, always endeavour to make a double shot, *i. e.*, to floor a couple with the first barrel: then, if you be not already in that position, spring on one knee, or bolt upright, and catch another with the second barrel; but, remember, in the latter case, you must be as quick as thought, for he is going with the speed of electricity; thus may you have three to bag. Such things I admit are not of every day occurrence; but I have seen this done very often; and what one shooter has done, another may accomplish by practice. But, if the firing station will not admit of your shooting from a rest, then, having cocked both barrels, and placed your gun-stock flat under your elbow, or, which is better, to the shoulder, ready for instantaneous firing, rise gently without any sudden motion, and if the little quadrupeds be shy, and show their heads only just peeping out above the mouth of the burrow, take a head, aim true, but dwell not; for, believe me, that head is very wont to disappear in "double quick;" in good sooth it doth not wear that little cunning-looking black eye for nothing!

Again, if the ground be a level exposure, or open warren, you may make an ambush by means of hurdles, drawn with

whins, or bushed with thorns, or a wall of sods, under cover of which you can either sit to wait for, or can crawl up to, these wary quadrupeds. A flight-shooting *box*, as hereafter described, might often be employed with murderous effect here, the shooter taking care to "*fill* the situation" early in the evening, before the rabbits show themselves.

Hunting rabbits in furze brakes, with terriers, or the small sort of puzzling beagles, so particularly adapted to this kind of shooting, is most exhilarating and delightful sport; believe me, my juvenile friends, it's capital fun! As a lad, I loved it dearly, and like it not a little still. On these occasions, place yourself at an advantageous post, so as to flank them, or to get a cross shot, as they dart out: your charge, No. 3, loose, or Eley, in the right barrel, supposing it to be fired first; and No. 2 or 3, Eley, in the left. Stand stock still; be all eye and ear; and shoot quick, and with judgment, using the right or left barrel, just as the bounding quadruped may happen to be the nearer to, or the more distant from you; for he usually goes the pace, and seldom far outside, before he pops suddenly into covert again.

In some situations the shooter will find himself compelled either to take long shots, say from sixty to eighty yards, at rabbits, or he cannot get one at all; a stout single, with four or five drachms of powder, and from an ounce and a half to two ounces of the Messrs. A or B, Eley, is the only recipe here, save one yet to be named.

I have, at times, had very good shooting among the bent or mat-grass (*psamma arenarium*), which grows on the sand-banks, on different parts of the coast.

No situations are better adapted for rabbits than these; for, in forming their burrows in the sides of the hills, they work to the best advantage, there being both a quick and easy fall for what they scratch out, and the labour so light,

they can burrow to any length or depth they please. I have been informed, too, that their skins* fetch a higher price than those taken in many parts of the interior, where there are hedges and bushes to tear them. The juvenile shooter will find most of the above rules as useful here as in other parts, with this exception, that he ought always to wear boots of some kind, for shoes are an eternal plague and source of delay, by constantly filling with sand, and thus compelling you to stop to empty them. There is also another peculiarity attending this sort of shooting, which is certain to puzzle a novice, and which, in truth, renders the rabbit as difficult a shot as he ever is. It is this: owing to the bent arching over the tracks of the rabbits, they are frequently totally hid, when running, so that the shooter must be entirely guided, in his aim, by the occasional momentary shaking, or waving motion of the grass, as the rabbit darts through it with unobstructed, and I think I might almost say, with unexampled speed. The grand point, here, is to beware of shooting behind him. At the same time, you must often shoot by guess; and yet, even then, with a little practice, you will pretty frequently knock over the great unseen, and not a little to your own satisfaction:

> "Bang! it is well, you saw him not,
> And yet you've killed him on the spot."

But if we are to speak of rabbit-shooting under the most favourable auspices, and which but few shooters, comparatively speaking, have the opportunity to witness, or to enjoy, we must then look only to the light soils, and particularly to the sandy districts of England, such as those of Lincolnshire,

* Contrary to what might have been expected, the pelts, or skins, of wild rabbits are thinner, and, therefore, not so tough in the leather as those of the tame ones. I have used the skins of tame rabbits as a lining for a gunning jacket, but those of the wild ones split.

Yorkshire, Lancashire, Norfolk, &c., to which the regularly established warrens are confined. For at the outskirts of the warren alone can the shooter look for regular sport with rabbits, as with other game; and here, whilst the hedgerows are being beaten, all he has to do is to plant himself so as to intercept the rabbits in their course betwixt the covert and their subterranean retreats.

An approved author of a former century tells us—"In a warren of small extent, much amusement may be procured by stopping up all the burrows at midnight, at which time the rabbits are almost all out at feed, and then going to hunt them the next morning; by thus cutting off their retreat, a man cannot fail to kill several; or he may stop up the burrows with hay, grass, or any other material, at the distance of two feet from the mouth, downwards, and then, when the rabbits are driven in, with the dogs, he may take as many as he pleases." The same author adds—"Rabbits are hunted with dogs at all times of the year; but the months of July and August are the most favourable; they then abound, and are of a good size: some have attained their full growth, and the smallest are half grown; earlier than this they are scarcely worth the trouble of shooting, and the dogs hunt them badly, because they do nothing but dodge about little bushes, not being in a condition to defend themselves."

As regards feats in rabbit-shooting, a year or two ago, Charles Scarisbrick, Esq., then High Sheriff for the county of Lancashire, beat the coverts at his seat in Wrightington, and killed 709 rabbits, and two pheasants, in the short space of five hours and a half. In one of the coverts he killed 218 head in twenty-five minutes; and as many as thirty a minute, during several minutes in succession.

This out-Toomers Toomer. Verily the worthy High Sheriff *is* "a *brick*." Few heads could have borne so many

discharges in so short a space of time, to say nothing of the performance itself, which was truly astonishing.

Rabbits are, sometimes, shot from a tree, as many park-keepers shoot deer; and Mr. Daniel says that poachers adopt this method. It is sure, therefore, to be a good one. It is one of the very few plans I have never tried, but have no doubt would answer, and, in some situations, better than any other, especially at the corner of a wood, or field, which gives the shooter the command of two sides at once. As to poaching, it must be honestly confessed that, throughout nearly the whole of rabbit-shooting, and of rabbit-catching, except where these animals are numerous and little disturbed, if success be desired, a degree of stealthy, creeping caution must be had recourse to, which, if it be not exactly akin to the cunning and prowling stratagem that distinguishes the poacher, is much more nearly allied to them than is any other gentlemanly diversion.

And here, with his permission, I will introduce some of the most needful admonitory hints to the young rabbit-shooter.

1st. Always avoid walking over the burrows as much as possible, for being often, to use a mercantile phrase, "very largely connected" one with the other, not only is the ground shaken thereby, but the sound is conveyed to a greater distance than a stranger would readily credit; and however deep the descent into a burrow may be, and however long and tortuous its course, it invariably—where the nature of the soil and freedom from roots, &c., will admit of free scratching—terminates with an ascent, usually at no great depth from the surface, where the rabbits most delight to lie; and, being quick of hearing, they will not stir if they suspect an enemy nigh. Again I say, therefore—

> "Tread softly, that the blind mole may not
> Hear a foot fall."—SHAKSPEARE.

2ndly. As their sense of smelling is even more acute than that of hearing, never attempt to approach them with your back to the wind.

3rdly. The moment you have fired at a rabbit with a single-barrel gun—for with a double you can, at the shortest notice, if required, administer "the (blue) pills as before,"—if he be not quite dead, run up to him, for rabbits are singularly tenacious of life, and, however severely wounded, will instinctively scramble into a burrow if it be possible. How often have I knocked over an old buck, nay, even a young one but little more than half grown, and, whilst loading the gun, watched him on his back, with his legs kicking in the air for several minutes, when suddenly he has found those legs, and made such good use of them, that by the time I could get up to the burrow he had gone down it. But as it often happens that a long arm and a screw ramrod will recover them, whenever rabbits are decidedly or suspectedly hit, the burrow they take should always be inspected, at the least, if not probed in this way. If you have an attendant he might carry a longer rod with a larger worm, which would both be more efficient in itself and would save your ramrod.

A small, quick, mute retriever, that will crouch close to you, and only stir at your bidding, will spare you the trouble of the run, cause less disturbance and show, and will often recover a wounded rabbit which you would have chased in vain.

In some cases where a rabbit, decidedly mortally wounded, takes a burrow, it may be worth while to dig him out. The vulgar opinion is, that, when wounded, rabbits always return to the mouth of the burrow to die; but I have seen them dug out dead from various parts of it.

In shooting in woods at rabbits—or even at hares, which, compared with the rapidity of the rabbit, are usually slow-paced in covert—be extremely cautious when and where you

fire. Let no shot, how fine or fair soever it may be, tempt you to discharge your gun unless you be certain that neither dog, horse, nor man, are in the way at the time. This precaution applies also to winged game, but far more so to the running sort. The flap of the woodcock, and the whir of the pheasant, give warning as they rise, and by the time it is expedient for you to shoot at them, themselves alone are commonly all that are in danger; but not so the quadrupeds, which, at one unexpected instant, present a clear, though a too far distant shot; at another, a most inviting one at a suitable distance; but, unfortunately, that long-legged fellow that carries the pannier, and is helping to beat, has just contrived to stick himself in the road, so that you are prevented firing for fear of spoiling his old leather gaiters.

Rabbits rustle away in such a fuss, and dart with such velocity, especially when closely pursued by a dog in full cry, that you are compelled to do quickly two things of importance; namely, to consider and to fire, and have but one moment allowed you to do both. But whenever you enter woods or other covert—REMEMBER!—to fire or *not* to fire, that is the question!

FERRETING RABBITS.

In my juvenile days I used to net my own flans and purse-nets, and had many a good turn at ferreting rabbits under some of the first masters, such as the far-famed Abraham Denston, in Derbyshire, and other worthies of the rat and rabbit-catching fraternity; and once had the extreme ill fortune, when rabbit-catching, to lose two of my best ferrets in one week; a sad and a heavy loss for a schoolboy who is seldom overburthened with coin.

You should not commence ferreting before the month of October; because then the young ones are strong and will

bolt freely. The ferret having been "coped" with a cobler's needle and waxed string (though it may be, and ought to be, efficiently muzzled* without this torture), is earthed on the windward side the burrow by an assistant, who must be careful to keep on that side, and also to be as silent and still as possible, otherwise the rabbits will rush to the wrong end of the burrow, and allow the ferret to scratch their backs to the bone rather than turn and bolt. The shooter should place himself so as to have the greatest command of the burrows. Loose shot is the best for both barrels here; and, should the rabbits be plentiful, if his servant or keeper stand behind him with a reserve gun, and keep loading as he fires, the shooter may often, by this means, get more shots. A mild, dry day, with a moderate breeze, is the best for ferreting; and provided you be warmly clad,—otherwise it will prove rather chilly work,—like most other modes of pursuing the rabbit, this will be found to afford more variety of sport than a novice would imagine. One feature in it deserving of note —which at once displays the instinctive sagacity of the animal, and even where there is no gun, often as unexpectedly as ludicrously enables him to make good his escape—is what is called the postern burrow, of which there is usually one to each set of earths, a sort of "private road" from a labyrinth, and which differs from the rest in being smaller in diameter; in having no mound of earth before it; and in often being as round and clear edged at the top as the interior of a can-

* Ferrets are now much less frequently coped, or muzzled, than formerly, as they are found to hunt with more spirit, and to start the rabbit sooner than when under restraint. A line is sometimes fastened round the little animal's neck, and, by having knots upon it, at intervals, you may judge how far he is from you; but a line should not be used where there is a probability of its becoming entangled with roots. In digging out the ferret and rabbit beware of cutting the cord with the spade.

non's muzzle. "Thus when every apparent hole is carefully netted, the shivering ferret entered, and the subterranean thunder causes the youthful breast to throb with expectation, how common the case, that the wily little creature pops out where least expected, possibly from beneath three or four ivy (or holly) leaves crossing each other, or a cobweb covering of moss, or a tuft of flaxen grass, issuing, apparently, from one root only, the upper part of which, as favouring the deceit, wantons in the wind like the forelock of a horse's mane."*

On showing this, my essay on rabbit-shooting, in manuscript, to a young Essex sportsman, he told me he had had much experience among rabbits, and if I wished him to do so he would give me a hint or two. This offer I gladly accepted. Accordingly, he very kindly took his pen and wrote as follows:—

"HINTS ON FERRETING.

"The small polecat ferret is decidedly the most active, eager, and the best. The ferret should be handled frequently when young, that it may be quite familiar to the touch, otherwise it becomes shy after it has been used a few times, and is very troublesome to catch towards evening, or when the least tired. It should never be fed for eight or ten hours, at the least, before hunting. Young rats, birds, or rabbits' entrails, are at all times good food for the ferret, and are to be recommended when they can be procured. The ferret may be used any time during the day till four o'clock, except in the depth of winter, when it is advisable never to hunt it after three o'clock. Always handle a ferret gently, and place your hand under the arms of the ferret. Be very careful

* See the old "Sporting Magazine" (Feb., 1824, p. 241), where is to be found an article "On the History and Peculiarities of the Rabbit;" and to which I am indebted for the above graphic and beautifully expressed description.

never to snap at it when taking it out of a rabbit-hole, or to a certainty your fingers will suffer. When shooting, a ferret should not be coped unless it is a very fast hunter, or a sure killer. A small bell tied round the neck will be found useful, and in a large burrow very advantageous. If a ferret is a killer it is a good plan to blunt the long teeth, which will enable the rabbit to free himself from his antagonist. Never turn a ferret, if rather shy, too often into the same earth, for, if tired, he is likely to lie up. A predisposition to do so is sometimes indicated (after a ferret is blooded) by its running continually to the mouths of the holes, by a playfulness, and by scratching; when this is the case, remove him immediately. A box about four feet long is the best habitation for ferrets, with an open front made of iron; and great care should be taken to keep them quite clean, having plenty of fresh air, as they are, when young, subject to many complaints."

To the above my worthy friend appended the following "Remark."

"In some of the southern counties, but more particularly in Essex, the rabbits (whether from the nature of the soil, which some suppose, but this seems a matter of doubt) remain obstinately sulky for three-fourths of the year, and cannot be prevailed upon to move, even with a coped ferret, and will rather have their very skins stripped from their backs than bolt, although the greatest caution be used not to shake the earths, or make the least noise. In Essex the rabbits are civil enough to bolt well *only* during the months of October, November, and December.

"This remark has been made, not only by myself, but also by two experienced gamekeepers in this county, who have killed rabbits in other counties, and may, therefore, be quoted as fair judges."

Large white ferrets are, by many, preferred to all others

for rabbit-hunting, and they are the best to see late in an evening.

A good fresh ferret will run eight hours; old ferrets, and those which are too hard run, will sleep in the holes.

And now I could just fancy some veteran sportsman, rather disposed to be sarcastic—which very few, by the way, are, for the freedom of the fields generally inspires an expansive liberality of feeling — upon some young friend of mine putting this modest production into his hands, gravely exclaiming, "I have only forgotten to inform my readers that the colour of wild rabbits is usually grey." To which I would beg to reply that after having been a rabbit shooter, for but very little short of forty years, and having made it my business the while to glean information wherever I could, it is only within the last four or five years that I became acquainted with some of the above plans, and which I learned neither from men nor from books, but from as cunning and as universally persecuted a set of coneys as ever man desired to smother in onions; and that by practising what I have endeavoured to inculcate, I was enabled pretty regularly to furnish my table with back and wings, done nicely brown, for the ladies, whilst I came in for my share of *caput mortuum* and L-E-G.

But, as the song says, "yet awhile, yet we must delay." What, more rabbit-shooting? Yes! A word or two, please you, reader, on those delightful little rifles.

All my life long I have loved to linger near the sea; and not one hundred years ago visited the small village of Filey, near Scarborough, with its fine extensive sands and noble bay. I never could stir from home without a gun of some sort, and on this occasion my small rifle was my sole dependance for the marine. I obtained permission to shoot with this rifle only at rabbits on a certain part of that coast; and, having

observed some burrows well stocked on one side a deep ravine, fixed my station on the opposite side; and in the course of two afternoons bagged, in seven shots, five well-grown young rabbits and an old one. The distance across I afterwards ascertained, by means of a cord, to be eighty-three yards. It was towards the end of August. Surely this speaks well for Purdey's small rifles. No shot-gun, however large, would have done such execution; for, admitting it to have regularly killed at this distance, which is extremely problematical, the rabbits terrified by the report, would have been very shy of showing themselves, after even a second discharge.

PIGEON-SHOOTING.

Having, at one time, had the honour, not only to be secretary to a highly respectable and sociable pigeon club, but also having had the satisfaction to carry off numerous massive tokens of success as a pigeon-shot, I confess my inability to make up my mind, all at once, to pass that sweeping censure upon this description of shooting, of which some preceding authors appear to have considered it deserving.

To place it in competition with any description of game-shooting would be absurd, for it comes rather under the definition of shooting practice than of a British field sport. But still, as practice, and a test of shooting skill too, it is, in my humble opinion, by no means undeserving the attention of sportsmen in general, and of young ones in particular.

True it is, your crack pigeon-shot may be by no means a superior game-shot, and the converse of the proposition may be equally true; but, if a man regularly make a good figure as a public pigeon-shot, I will venture to assert that it must be very much indeed his own fault if, by a fair share of practice, he do not acquire the knack of bringing down game also in handsome style, and with nearly as unerring certainty.

The first formal record of pigeon-shooting, as far, at least, as my knowledge extends, is to be found in the first volume of the old "Sporting Magazine" (p. 251), where it is spoken of in the following encomiastic terms:—"The great celebrity of this sport, in which some of the first shots in England are so frequently engaged, encourages us to communicate an account of its fashionable influence and increasing prevalence,

as a subject applicably entitled to a place in our sporting receptacle."

The Old Hats on the Uxbridge Road, so called, I believe, from the circumstance of an old hat having been first used to cover the hole dug in the ground in which the pigeon was placed, constituting the primitive 'trap,' was originally the grand place of rendezvous for the amateurs of the blue rock; but for many years past the Red House Enclosure, at Battersea, has been the fashionable place of resort, where numbers of the most distinguished sportsmen, and very best shots of the day, have, from time to time, contended for various valuable pieces of plate, and sometimes for heavy sums of money.

There have been many extraordinary performances in pigeon-shooting, at single birds, by Captain Ross, and other gentlemen, first-rate shots; but, as regards double shooting, the late Mr. Shoubridge's feat of killing ten successive double shots out of eleven, and the first bird of the eleventh, at twenty-one yards with the five traps, stands, and probably ever will remain, unequalled.

I have, myself, shot with Mr. Shoubridge in private, and as a pigeon shot he was the very best I ever saw; no man judged of distance with nicer precision, and his birds were nearly always full and decisively struck. He was also a very superior game shot. His favourite pigeon charge was one ounce and a half, No. 4, and four drachms powder.

The London tin spring-flap pigeon-trap is now in general use; but the best and most noisy-falling trap I ever saw, was a large cast-iron one at the said Enclosure, capable of holding two birds with ease.

The usual distance at which the shooter stands from the trap is twenty-one yards, and the bounds within which the bird must fall, in order to be scored, are as may be agreed

upon; but are seldom less than a circumference of sixty, or more than a circumference of 100 yards from the trap as a centre.

A few words to the novice in pigeon-shooting. On a damp day always load as quickly as you can after firing. Previous to loading, invert the gun and knock the nose against a piece of wood laid on the ground to shake out the scales. After this, one person may hold it upwards, in an inverted position, whilst another wipes it out with clean rag, to within a few inches of the bottom. But I should much prefer the former method. The gun should be washed out, or the barrel changed after eight or ten shots; and if loose shot be used, it should be slightly oiled in the proportion of a teaspoonful of sweet oil to a basin of shot; this prevents leading. Put the shot into a bag and shake it about, by which means the surface of each pellet will be thinly coated with oil. If the barrel shine too much, it should be made dim with water, or fine emery and water. Rub off the dirt occasioned by the smoke of the cap, after every shot, with a damp rag, and occasionally use the peg-cleaner, having first put a blank cap, or one without priming in it, on the peg.

Pigeon-gun locks should have fine, quick action, and very strong springs.

In double shooting, when the wind blows across from the right, always shoot at the left bird first, and *vice versâ;* by this means the smoke is conveyed away, instead of obstructing your view of the second bird.

In a match, each party, of course, finds birds for the other. Those birds which flutter the most in the basket, generally fly the best. Milk-white birds fly slower than the blues, but are not so distinctly seen in bright sunshine; at other times they are easier to hit, and, therefore, preferable to shoot at with a rifle.

No. 6 is the size in general use for pigeon-shooting, but Shoubridge, for the most part, used No. 4.

In conclusion, it may be observed that though pigeon-shooters be sometimes exposed to the lip writhing in irony, and the sarcastic smiles of some of their more thorough-game brethren of the trigger, yet "it is fact," that, to the votaries of the trap, the sporting world stand indebted for many wrinkles in the art of loading, firing, and building the gun.

Pigeons, shot out of the breeding season, if kept a good while, make a capital pie.

ROOK-SHOOTING.

"Many gentlemen are in the possession of rookeries; in fact, they are a part of the old hereditary families, and in many places the 'Rook-shooting' is looked forward to as an anniversary of no small gratification, and the cementing of old friendships formed in the days of youth and pleasure."—SPORTING MAG.

"EVERYTHING is fun in the country," saith the adage; and as this sort of black game comes in, when all other game is out of season, and when scarcely aught else but a young pigeon or a tame rabbit is to be had; and as "young rooks," according to Colonel Hawker, "by being first skinned, and then [query, after their back bones have been taken out?] soaked all night in cold spring water, make pies, which are worthy the notice of the most scientific gourmand;" I trust my readers, especially the juvenile portion of them, will not

deem even a few pages ill-bestowed upon a description of "Rural Sport" which rewards the shooter with

"A dainty dish to set before the king."

The means employed to bag these birds, show the general estimation in which they are held for affording sport, if not a delicious repast: guns, pistols, air-guns, walking-stick rifles, cross-bows, &c., being each and all used in this Indian warfare.

In most good rookeries, a regular "rook-shooting day" takes place every year, about the middle of the month of May, but varying a few days in different rookeries, according as they may be situated "far north," or the contrary; and in the same rookery at different times, as nidification, which depends, in some degree, upon the weather, may have commenced at an earlier or a later period, and as the season may have been propitious, or otherwise, to the growth of the young birds. These always thrive far better during wet than droughty weather, the parent birds finding it so much less difficult to procure food (chiefly worms) for their young in the former than in the latter instance, to say nothing of "growing showers" which must be extremely refreshing to a young *blackee!* The rule ought to be, never to allow a gun to be fired until a few of the most forward young ones can fly pretty well, and a good many sit quite clear of the nests; because then the birds being full-fledged are worth skinning when shot, and shooting may be had for every description of shooter. As soon as the cannonading commences, many of the young ones in the nests find their legs, hop out, and become "perchers;" the "flyers" are, of course, the only birds which ought to be fired at with a shot-gun, except by young beginners, and such seniors as rank among "the very worst shots in all England," or who have yet to learn "The Art of Shooting Flying."

There are but few sorts of shooting-engines which I have not possessed; and once I was the master of an air-gun, which, like most guns of mine, was never allowed to lie long idle. I used to shoot rooks and rabbits with it by day, and at night to snuff candles with it at fifteen or twenty yards distance, and very true it shot. How many a time have I, and five or six of my friends, taken it in turn to pump air into those balls which were of iron—far more dangerous than copper balls, because when those of iron burst they fly in pieces, whilst the others are merely rent in the weakest part whence the air escapes—oiling and pumping till we were exhausted. It was a great mercy that no accident ever happened to us. After I had had this gun just long enough to become partial to it, I received intimation that a faithful servant of a relation of mine, whilst filling one of these copper balls with air for his master's gun in rook-shooting, had received his death blow; the screw of the valve gave way, and the ball went through the poor fellow's body. In short, the principle of these guns, how scientific soever it may be, is insecure, and, therefore, the utmost caution affords no certainty of safety.

I immediately bid a sempiternal adieu to air-guns, and disposed of mine forthwith.

I had, however, seen the advantage of a light gun and a small-sized ball for shooting rooks, rabbits, &c., too strikingly manifested in the little discarded wind instrument, not to feel anxious to combine all its excellencies under a safer form; accordingly I explained to Purdey my plan of a very small rifle with a small ball, about 100 to the pound. This was accomplished; and the pattern, both single and double, became afterwards fashionable, and to this day I know of no such delectable toys for rooks and rabbits; the ball being so small destroys with little injury, especially when the object is hit in the brain; and as a lady's thimbleful of powder serves

for several charges, the report is trifling. They are the very thing for perchers, and, if the head alone be your target, afford scope for the exercise of your best skill.

As a proof that these small rifles are efficient for the purpose, I may mention that, on one occasion, having a party of friends to shoot rooks, in four hours and a half I shot and bagged 103. On another occasion, in the park at Ripley Castle, where the trees are all tall, and many of them very slender at the top, I bagged, in the presence of many individuals, twenty-two "perchers" in succession, and some of these when the right hand only was used in supporting the gun.

The tyro will, of course, soon discover that the upper half of the bird is the vulnerable part, if you mean to make certain of its coming down. I once saw a person hit a rook seven times with my small rifle before it fell. Where the trees are low, and when the weather is still, perchers should always be shot in the head; at other times, a plumper in the breast is the "decided hit," decidedly.

Cross-bows and air-guns have this advantage, they never set fire to rick-yards, which are often contiguous to rookeries; but the small rifle I have recommended, especially when loaded, without a patch—when all that is required is a ball a size larger than the one used with a patch—is certainly the safest of all rook-destroying engines discharged by gunpowder, be the wadding what it may.

Having discussed the various modes of destroying rooks, I proceed now to offer some few

OBSERVATIONS ON THE ROOK, AND PRESERVING IT.

"There is no wild bird in England," says Waterton, "so completely gregarious as the rook, or so regular in its daily movements. It remains in society the year throughout; in flocks it builds its nest; in flocks it seeks for food; and in

flocks it retires to roost." In fact, common as the rook is, it is yet, perhaps, in habits, in sagacity, in musically discordant voice, and in other peculiarities, one of the most interesting and remarkable of British birds.

It appears that "rooks delight to assemble and build near human residences;"* and that when an old mansion has been pulled down, the rooks have deserted the rookery, though the trees have remained precisely in the same state. It also appears probable that the popular notion of "rooks leaving a rookery at the death of the owner of it," is not altogether a vulgar error.

But now to "the preserves!"—for many a man is as anxious to preserve his rooks as his pigeons or partridges, and some have no other *manor* than their rookery. As in nearly all other departments relative to shooting, so in this I am enabled to offer my practical hints from personal experience. If, according to the rule above-named—as, in my opinion, the best adapted to ensure the best shooting—a few of the most forward-bred rooks escape altogether, so much the better, as they will be the strongest to breed from the next year; there are always plenty destroyed in one way or another. In some seasons, one-half the young birds are blown down by high winds, especially if the trees be tall and slender at the top. If the hurricane come early, and merely shake the eggs out of the nests, these, probably, will be replaced as soon as possible; but if the young ones be then in a half-fledged state, they are soon rocked out, and it is probable that the parent birds will not attempt to supply their places; but if the young birds be nearly full fledged at the time, they will stick their claws through the bottom of the nest's lining, lie close down, and hold on so tenaciously, that they will only fall with the nest itself, which is not often shaken from its situation.

* "Mag. Nat. Hist.," p. 149—549.

And though the rook does sometimes rob the potatoe fields, bill up the young wheats, fly away with the Highflyer walnuts, and, now and then, gets shot for these and similar misdemeanors, and, moreover, gibbeted, *in terrorem*, as a salutary warning to his surviving brethren, still he destroys the grubs of the cockchafer and Tommy-long-legs, checking their destructive ravages; and all the arguments of intelligent agriculturists, *pro* and *con*, conclude, at last, with—"on the whole, rooks are friends to farmers." If, therefore, the rook afford both pleasure and profit to man; seek his protection; build his nest within the smoke of his dwelling; wheel his aërial flight over that house which is his castle, and "caw round his tower," let him not too hastily seek to extirpate his cheerful and confiding friend—

"The sable tenant of the elmy grove"—

who delights him living, who mourns him dead, and who, if he do some little harm, it should not be forgotten, does, also, more good; and, like other bipeds is, sometimes,

"NOT SO BLACK AS HE IS PAINTED."

There is scarcely any British bird, how dark or variegated soever in plumage it may naturally be, of which white, or partially white, varieties have not been shot. I once shot a blackbird with a milk-white tail; and, like most other experienced shooters, have seen or shot milk-white varieties of other birds. A lily-white wild duck (possibly, though, a tame one turned wild) was frequently seen at the Tees Bay a few winters ago—highly conspicuous among her duskier companions; but no gunner had the luck to secure the "fair one." Rooks often sport in this way; and every spring we have an account, in some newspaper or other, of the extraordinary occurrence of "a nest full of white rooks* being to be seen in Mr. Somebody's rookery"—with inquiries as to the cause. This circumstance, ere now, has been a complete poser to the learned, who have called in the aid of mental impressions and other phenomena to endeavour to account for it; but to the humble author of this unostentatious volume, frequently reflecting on the subject, it hath always appeared a matter only capable of this explanation—that, in forming her solutions, Nature had forgotten to put in the colouring matter; just as it has been observed of certain bipeds, not overburthened with sense, that "Nature had made them up in a hurry, and had forgotten to put any brains in." On naming the above to a learned friend of mine, as a sapient conjecture of my own, he assured me that this was now a regularly admitted theory among modern physiologists, and referred me to "Bostock," or some such name, in proof of his statement.

But to return from this long digression. The best plan, by far, if not the only good one, for preserving your young rooks from the clutches of nocturnal, or peep-o'-day depredators, is first to hammer tenter-hooks into the collateral

* And yet, in the days of Juvenal, a white crow appears to have been proverbially rare: "*Corvo albo rarior*," says he.

branches, commencing five or six feet from the bottom of each branch, and then to have a collar of them round the top part of the boll of the tree, the points of the hooks being placed alternately up and down. No one can pass these with impunity; hammer them in pretty well, they will do little or no injury to the timber. Of course, all means of prevention placed below the reach of a long ladder, are so much moonshine. Sometimes a few large hooks, or spikes, are used with this intention, but these are objectionable, as they not only injure the timber, but might do serious injury to a rook-stealer, whilst the others merely give him a premonitory hint; and your object is not "punishment," but "the prevention of crime." Again, their paucity, or being "few and far between," renders them an inefficient protection; as by day, early in a morning, or by moonlight, a dexterous fellow, walking up the tree by means of what are called climbing-irons, or creepers, with a gardener's hammer in his pocket, will either extract the hooks, or drive their heads under the bark, in pretty quick time; but it were an endless labour to attempt to act thus with the small hooks. Indeed, by daylight, an active hand, aided by creepers, will discover a north-west passage in spite of the large hooks, if thinly placed. The trees at Foremark, in Derbyshire, the seat of Sir Francis Burdett, were among the tallest I ever beheld in a rookery, and were thus spiked. But, when a Repton school-lad, I have seen some magical touches at this same Foremark,

> "In the merry month of May,
> When bees from flower to flower do hum;"

touches which would have astonished many, and have petrified some; rendering the acquisition of young rooks a feat of perilous achievement, exceeded only by the dreadful trade of a St. Kildan bird-catcher. I have two lithesome lads in my eye, at this moment, who were wont to play these giddy

and fearful pranks, and whom I would gladly immortalize—except that, like my Lord Brougham, I "had always a bad memory for proper names." Some, perhaps, may deem the above preventive measure as feudal and *barb*arous; but, in reality, the very contrary is the case, for the small hooks will not inflict any serious injury; and every year, in every county in England, limbs are broken, and sometimes lives lost, in rookeries, the trees being often very slippery from rain or dew at night, at which time, also, it is next to impossible to distinguish whether or not the branches at the top are strong enough to bear. At the same time, when you are about to arm your rookery with this sort of *chevaux de frise*, it is quite as well to make the affair as public as may be. You had best, therefore, cause information of the same to be conveyed to the nearest "Tom and Jerry" and barber's shop, when it will soon be buzzed "throughout the United Kingdom." This once accomplished, you may henceforth rest in peace; and, after a grand rook slaughter, get a careful fellow to take a barrow-load, in funereal pile, through the village, and to portion them out with

"A hand, open as day, to melting charity,"

equably, according to the number in family of each "bold peasant."

It is experience which teaches little things of this sort; and several years ago, in a rookery of my own, before I adopted the small-hook plan, I received vast annoyance from the annual visits of a daring and regularly organized gang of rook stealers; who, not content with rooks—though they frequently abstracted the better half of these before they were half-fledged—made more free than welcome with whatever else they could "prig" about the premises. Upon one occasion the enemy were routed before they had taken any booty,

and in a manner so effectual that it is, probably, second only to the other plan. Perhaps my readers will excuse my grave endeavours to describe and illustrate the same in the following section :—

"Come, Disappointment, come,
Not in thy terrors clad."*

"They have their exits and their entrances."†

I had a spring-gun named "Tom Spring;" so Tom was fixed in the usual way, and, in a part of the rookery immediately contiguous to the house, a wire was attached, at one end, to the trigger, whilst the other, at the distance of 150 yards, was fastened to a tree on the opposite side the wood. The barrel was treated with as much of Messrs. Curtis and Harvey's very best as left room for about five inches of clay, duly tempered with Promethean art, to be hard rammed upon it, in lieu of other wadding. The muzzle was fixed downwards, for I deprecate the use of spring-guns in every way except as an alarum. Behind a pair of folding-doors, which opened on the rookery, was stationed, as watcher and catcher, a long-legged Yorkshire yokel, who, as Mr. Boaden says of Emery, "was a correct representation of all the loutish cunning of the three Ridings;" and not far remote from him, lay trusty Nelson, a fine Newfoundland dog, who was afterwards treated with a hempen necklace for only one fault—an inordinate relish for living mutton. I knew, or thought I knew, the time o' year, and time o' night, when I might anticipate the pleasure of a call from my friends, of whose punctuality of attendance I entertained but little doubt. Accordingly I resolved on sitting up myself, in order to greet them on their arrival. It was, indeed, a charming time,—not one of those awfully still nights which compels every village tailor, as he walks through a wood, to

"Whistle aloud to keep his courage up;"

* H. K. White. † Shakspeare.

but a gently soothing breeze prevailed. I felt certain, therefore, that our heroes, "nothing daunted," would not hesitate a moment to enter the wood; at the same time, imagined that the duration of their stay there was not best known to themselves; and that by the time one of them had got to the top of a tree, the rest might, very probably, be at the top of their speed. Notwithstanding all this, just as the midnight hour approached, having had my full share of watching on the previous night and morning, I felt uncommonly drowsy; and, therefore, having given my directions to York, retired to roost. Every person who goes to bed knows that there is a state, somehow, betwixt sleeping and waking—a sort of delicious slumber induced by a pleasing weariness—a kind of

"Loving languor which is *not* repose:"

a state, in fact, better felt than described. Now, reader, I had just proceeded half a stage beyond this felicitous mood—in short, if I must candidly impart to you the truth without any equivocation or mental reservation—I was nearly fast asleep, when, on a sudden, I was *rayther* unpleasantly startled by a most tremendous echoing roar, accompanied with a shock resembling the fall of the house-end. I never *can* forget it! On recovering what I had momentarily lost, it immediately struck me that this must be "the arrival," and that "the tender chord" had been "touched." So

"Up I rose, and donn'd my clothes,"

and away to the scene of action, where luckily I arrived just in time,

"By glimpse of moonshine chequering through the trees,"

to gain a pretty tolerable view of the consternation which the thunder had occasioned, and of the prowess of Nelson and long-legs in pursuit of the fugitives.

Should the reader be of poetical temperament, and one of

"the privileged class of beings who draw upon the inexhaustible resources of nature for their amusement and delight," sure I am I need tender no apology to him for the following quotation; and should he be one of another sort, he has my full permission to skip the whole.

In expatiating on "The Poetry of Sound," one of the most intellectual and instructive of modern authoresses descants as follows on the cawing of the rook, and in her wonted felicitous and mellifluous diction.

"Why certain sounds should be agreeable or disagreeable to the ear, may be best understood by examining the principles of music—which, for more reasons than one, it would be unwise to introduce into the present work. The established fact that the ear is gratified by harmony, and pained by discord, is quite sufficient for my present purpose; but why, under certain circumstances, we are delighted with sounds which are in themselves and separate from association, the most intolerable discord, may very properly form a subject of serious consideration here. Perhaps one of the most striking, as well as most familiar instances of this kind, is the cawing of the rook. When this bird is taken captive and brought into your room, nothing can well be more offensive to the ear, more harsh, or discordant, than its voice; and yet the same voice, heard in certain situations in the open air, is proverbially musical—heard as a number of these social and sagacious inhabitants of the woods are winging their slow and solemn flight,* while their shadows flit over the richly cul-

* Is not this the

——— "è pastu decedens agmine magno
Corvorum increpuit densis exercitus alis,"

of Virgil?

And again, our Shakspeare has,

"Light thickens; and the crow
Makes wing to the rooky wood."

tivated landscape, and, approaching the abodes of man, they wheel round and round in graceful circles, returning homeward with the same speed, the same desire, and the same end in view, the language of the whole community reminding the listener of the voices of weary but contented travellers, well pleased to return from their journey; while they congratulate each other upon the peace, the comfort, and the security which await them in their ancestral dwellings.

"Though the language of the rook is extremely limited, and to those who know little of rural scenes and rural pleasures, extremely monotonous, it is capable of varying that language by a cadence, or expression, both familiar and interesting to the privileged class of beings who draw upon the inexhaustible sources of nature for their amusement and delight. In the spring, when the rooks first begin to be busy with their nests, their language, like their feelings and occupations, is cheerful, bustling, and tumultuous. Within the rookery it is perfect discord; but, heard in the distance, it conveys to the mind innumerable pleasing associations with that delightful season of the year, and the universal alacrity and joy with which the animal creation resume their preparations for a new and happy life. But it is in the autumn, when the bustle of the spring and summer has subsided, that the language of the rook is most poetical. There is then a melancholy cadence in its voice, heard slowly, and at intervals, which is in perfect unison with the general aspect of nature; nor is it difficult to suppose that this sagacious bird, perched upon the topmast branch of some venerable tree, is making observations upon the external world, and sympathising in the universal tendency to decay, exhibited in the scattered fruit, the faded foliage, and the withered grass."—*The Poetry of Life, by Sarah Stickney*, vol. i. p. 261.

Whilst this work is going through the press, albeit the

day (1st of April, 1842) be somewhat ominous, I cannot resist naming a circumstance which has just occurred to me. Walking in Cheapside, this morning, I observed a solitary tree (a sycamore, I think) at the corner of Wood-street, in which were perched three pairs of rooks, with three nests in a greater or less degree of forwardness towards completion. I understand, from the neighbours, that these birds which used this tree some years ago, have, till this season, deserted it. Their return shews their love of home and their strong attachment (already dwelt on, page 303) to human dwellings, even amid the crowd, bustle, and noise, of our overgrown metropolis.

Let not any "MODERN SHOOTER" dare molest those rooks, sacred to the city!

PERCUSSION MUSKET.

I HAD intended to have been wholly silent on this subject, which would more properly have been introduced in the early part of this work; but, on second thoughts, which are said to be the best, have resolved to record my opinions on this most important weapon; the more so, as it does not require the gift of prophecy to foretel increasing warfare at no distant day, and, probably, on no very limited scale.

That the British musket has ever been a formidable weapon is not to be denied. But, is it as efficient, or anything nearly as efficient, as it might be made to be? "that's the question!"

I unhesitatingly answer—No!

I assert, that there is scarcely any one point about the latest produced percussion musket that is not susceptible of improvement, in a greater or less degree, and in not a few respects it is capable of considerable alteration for the better.

Many valuable remarks, on the improved construction of the musket, by Mr. Greener and others, appeared in "The Times" in the months of November and December, 1841; but of what use is it suggesting hints, when there appears such a determination, and, in my opinion, such an unreasonable determination, not to adopt them?

WILD FOWL SHOOTING.

"It is the nature of everything that is great and useful both in the animate and inanimate world, to be *wild* and irregular."—Lord Erskine.

"If *tame ducks* were wanting,
And *wild ducks* were flown,
Oh! who would inhabit
This bleak world alone!"

The bare mention of "that dreary monosyllable—last," ever conveys to the mind associations the most doleful and lugubrious; except it be the last stage of a tedious journey, the last word which the wife always *will* have, and the last twinge of departing gout! Far otherwise is it with that little word *wild*, which frequently excites emotions the most pleasurable, lively, and even exalted. Thus the die-a-way eye

of a beautiful woman is enchanting, yet it is as nothing compared with hers, which,—

> ——————— "*wild* as the gazelle's,
> Now brightly bold, or beautifully shy,
> Wins as it wanders, dazzles where it dwells."

What a degraded brute is an English jackass! "that thing wot carries wegetables!" Yet who sees not poetic beauty in the description which tells us—"and the *wild* asses quench their thirst!" What a crest-fallen, degenerate animal is the lordly lion, when in caged imprisonment:—but view him a *wild* beast, roving at large:—list to the royal brute's nocturnal roar, re-echoing through his native forest *wild*. See him leap from his lair—shake the dew-drops from his shaggy mane—or, with glaring eye-balls, "meeting a settler," and he becomes at once an object of terror and admiration! What cockney—even in Metropolitan suburbs—could bring himself to perpetrate an act so cold-blooded as the wilful and deliberate murder of a tame goose; yet where's the sportsman who exults not to bring down a *wild* one from her towering height? And how many a very worthy father, who never thought of going a fox-hunting twice in his life, has followed his only daughter, best pace, to Gretna Green, and found, at last, that he has been all the while engaged in a very interesting pursuit—both to himself and the public at large—because it was a WILD GOOSE chase!

Who could fancy a poem woven in sooty Manchester, or moulded at button Brummagem? yet how exquisite that same, if composed on mossy bank, in Dove or Love Dale, by poet or poetess

> "Warbling native wood notes *wild*."

No man would care to see a course within a walled paddock, but what sportsman would not—if any one *could*—have fol-

lowed old Snowball over Flixton *Wild?* A true sportsman never hunts, and never ought to "shoot a cat;" yet hunting the *wild* cat, with Scotch terriers, among Scotch rocks, is a sport truly exhilarating, and worthy Breadalbane's self, who, ere now, hath made it his pastime.

"The domestic rabbit," says Sir John Sebright, Bart., in his 'Observations upon the Instinct of Animals,' "is, perhaps, more easily tamed than any other animal, excepting the dog; the *wild* rabbit, on the contrary, is the most *untameable* animal that I know, and I have had most of the British mammalia in my possession. I have, when a boy, taken the young ones from the nest, and endeavoured to tame them, but never could succeed."* What is park-shooting to the noble sport of deer-stalking, on

"Albion's hills of wind?"

Where's the pleasure of shooting partridges when they lie close and "dead as stones?" but how satisfactory to bring one down when the birds are *wild* as hawks! Finally, not to run *wild* on the subject, what man compelled to thread the mazy labyrinths of the law, would not, to tamer guides, prefer, as the conductor of his case, Mr. Sergeant *Wilde*. To me, therefore, I repeat, there is a distinct charm in this very monosyllable itself, opposed, in a sporting sense, as it appears to be, to all that is dull, tame, stale, and insipid.

Nevertheless, wild fowl shooting is less generally followed than any other branch of the delightful recreation which is the subject of this volume. To some whose constant residence is in the interior, wild fowl are really *raræ aves;* some dislike getting wet, and the health of others will not bear that ex-

* The eye of the wild goose, and of the wild rabbit, are both peculiarly indicative of the wildness of their nature; but the wild, penetrating stare of the wounded cormorant is wildness itself.

posure to it which must ever, in a greater or less degree, attend a successful pursuit of the diversion; and as to coast-shooting of all kinds, it is to be feared that many decline it, on the very absurd ground of its being pursued by the vulgar, or because—as the chimney-sweeper said to the dustman, on another and a memorable occasion—"it's low life." But if wild fowl shooting in general, and on the sea-coast in particular, be somewhat at a discount in point of the number of its professors, the happy few who do follow it will, probably, yield in ardour of pursuit, and in enthusiastic love of their diversion, to no other class of sportsmen. For my own part I have always had a sincere attachment to it in all its branches.

Common wild fowl shooting, with a shoulder duck-gun, has long been in vogue, and has often been the theme of ancient sporting authors; but, until Colonel Hawker's work appeared, wild fowl shooting, on salt water, had been scarcely touched upon—still less had any one "of gentle blood" ventured to commit his valuable case to "the vasty deep," in case so fragile as that yclept a shooting punt. The merit, therefore, of having "invented this new pleasure," or, at the least, of having added it to the stock of sporting recreations, attaches exclusively to the gallant Colonel, who, for many years past, has, himself, regularly followed the diversion with uncommon diligence, and still keeps it up with all the enthusiastic ardour of his more juvenile days. As a practical performer he is most successful, and is, perhaps, the very best wild fowl shot round the British coast; which qualifications, united to his perspicuity in the communication of his ideas, have peculiarly fitted him to become an author on the subject. For, as Pope so justly recommends—

> "Let those teach others who themselves excel,
> And write on shooting who have shot so well."

Johnson says, "Much is due to those who first broke the way to science, and left only to their successors the task of smoothing it." What shall we say, then, of our author, who has not only formed the new road and broken all "the metal" for it, but who has put that metal on, and consolidated it also? Hail, Hawker! Mac Adam of duck-shooters, hail! — our revered predecessor, our αρχαγιτοσ!

So much, indeed, has been written, and so ably, by our author on the present subject, that any further remarks upon it by another may be deemed presumptuous, if not wholly superfluous; but not to mention what even he himself hath voluntarily declared, that "a few years are sufficient to put a sporting book out of date"—it must not be forgotten that the subject, so far from having been exhausted, is yet new, inasmuch as he is the only one, to my knowledge at least, who has formally dilated upon it. Shall I, therefore, be open to censure in imagining him not altogether displeased—possibly somewhat refreshed—at finding (after a lapse, too, of so many years) an almost solitary brother of the craft, not only bitten with the same fancy as himself, but like him, too, disposed to communicate his humble notions on the subject to their mutual juvenile brethren of the *trig.* and of the *big?* The poet saith—

> "He who excels in what we prize,
> Appears a hero in our eyes;"

and though my performances may not have been commensurate with my zeal, still I would venture to hope that both have been sufficiently respectable, in the general dearth of candidates for punting honours, to enable me to stand pretty well among my sporting friends as a delineator of coast-shooting scenes. I flatter myself that, should this volume meet the eye of my distinguished predecessor, he will not be offended to find many of his own ideas corroborated by a stranger, and on

parts, too, of the coast remote from his own; and where I have ventured to differ from him in opinion—and it may still be that I (not Homer) nod—it will easily be perceived I have done so, not from captious motives, but from an honest desire to arrive at the same goal to which his own endeavours, and that fine enthusiasm of his I so esteem, have obviously been directed—the advancement of the art itself, as much as possible, towards perfection. And if, in giving my opinions with that freedom which I conceive long experience entitles me to use, without exposing myself to the imputation of intrusive forwardness, any little spirit of rivalry, or more objectionable motive, should be considered to have guided my pen, I can truly, and with feelings far different from those of pedantry, say, of the gallant author and his work—

"Non equidem invideo magis miror."

In short, he is the father of the art, and all others who follow in his wake can only be considered as disciples of the school of which he was the founder.

APOLOGY FOR STANCHION-GUN SHOOTING.

"—— Pudet hæc opprobria nobis
Et dici potuisse, et non potuisse refelli."—Ovid.

To attempt to recommend a pursuit to juvenile sportsmen whose minds may previously have been deeply imbued with prejudices against it, without having first endeavoured to dispel those prejudices, were mere Sisyphian labour. Previous, therefore, to entering upon the various descriptions of wild

fowl shooting, by sea and land, I purpose investigating the sources of those prejudices; the more so, as some have inveighed vehemently against the diversion, and, as it would seem, with more anxiety to ridicule what they themselves have not tested, and, therefore, can hardly be said to understand (*damnant quod non intelligunt*), than to give fair play to that which, rightly understood, constitutes a description of sport, in reality, the very reverse of what they have represented it to be, and would fain persuade the uninitiated that it is.

I proceed to name a few of the more prominent objections against this truly noble sport, and thus endeavour to rescue a favourite art from what I conceive to be unmerited obloquy. It is objected, then—

1st. That it is *infra dig.*, or unbecoming a gentleman, because those who are not gentlemen frequently follow it, and because mud will cleave to boots.

2ndly. That it is hardly fair, inasmuch as, by such means, so many birds are sometimes killed at one shot, which not only has a poaching appearance, but deprives the more inland sportsman of that part of his rural diversion which he deservedly prizes highly—his bit of wild fowl shooting.

3rdly. That it deprives the common, or "poor gunner," as our objectors pathetically call him, of his livelihood. And,

Lastly. That it spoils flight-shooting, by driving the birds away altogether, and, therefore, injures the "harmless village rustics," as they are poetically styled, and other land shooters, as well as the "poor gunners."

Now, in regard to the first objection, if it have any weight at all, it is equally applicable to all other sports. For instance, a clod rides to hounds on a jackass, and a flying tailor, or some little Paddy, follows them on foot; and yet fox-hunting was never accused of being a less noble or gentlemanly pastime on these accounts; and with the exception of "launching"

—which no gentleman could ever think of trying twice—or, occasionally, where the mud is softer than usual, the gunner may shoot the season through, and every day keep his boots or shoes cleaner than the land shooter. I do not say that this is the case in all places—in Pool Harbour, for example—but it is so in not a few, to my certain knowledge, and among the rest, in Tees Bay, where the major part of the best shooting is on fine sand; without any exception, the cleanest shooting I ever had of any sort or kind: and, after all, with a short-handled yarn mop—a very useful article in a canoe—what signifies a little mud?

The former part of the second objection is fact; the latter is not so. For it *is* true that heavy shots are sometimes made with large guns on the coast, though but rarely in open weather; but it is *not* true that the sport is thereby spoiled in the country. When a man must shoot at a very long distance to get a shot at all, and especially in these days of active competition, he requires a gun heavier and longer than usual, with a proportionate charge; and if the birds don't get out of its reach, that "arn't no fault of his'n." I never yet knew a man, how much soever he might boast of fastidious scrupulosity in taking the outside bird of the covey, for fear of deranging the plumage of the rest, who was not delighted in the ratio of the number that fell to his gun. There certainly is something agreeable, perhaps natural to man, in flooring a few at one shot—I mean abstractedly from all gormandizing, after considerations, or "family shots." I once was shooting in company with a friend, and his dog pointing, he hastened to the spot, when up got three partridges; he fired his single-barrel, and brought down the whole. He capered about a little, at the time, and was evidently in high good humour with himself and his own peculiar prowess. Since then years have sped, and, like myself, my friend has grown somewhat grey, and

rather sour from the world's over good usage, and none the better for wear. Our visits are "few and far between;" but whenever we do meet they are cordial; and, sooner or later, the three partridges are sure to be shot over again. Besides, it must not be forgotten that, if the gunner kill a big lot, he makes a big noise, and drives the biggest part of his birds miles off; whilst the landsman, when blazing away in one field, does not alarm the birds in the next; and, perhaps, in the course of the day, has his dozen shots at the same covey. Again, the landsman can shoot every day in spite of the weather: not so our brother of the *big*, who, from weather too fine or too foul—the one nearly as unpropitious as the other to his sport—may, on an average, fairly calculate on three blank days out of the six, being often prevented by boisterous weather, for weeks in succession, from launching his frail bark at all. Surely, therefore, he is entitled to thirteen to the dozen when he does kill. The landsman grumbles if he do not get his ten fair shots, at the least, in a day, and frequently gets many more; whilst the poor amateur gunner, meanwhile, seldom has more than two or three of any sort, and is satisfied—moderate man—with even one good one! The gunner thinks it a capital season if, during an open winter, he kill his 200 or 300 head of the Anas tribe; but what is this to the "game list" of the land-shooter, kept in a book all duly printed, lined, and ruled for the occasion, with a separate compartment for his honour's own valuable minutes on each day's sport; the gunner knows no such ready-reckoning luxury as this. The one kills the greatest number at a shot; but which kills the most in the long run? Then it is said, that it injures the land-shooter's sport. Pshaw!—it does not! On the contrary, by banishing the birds from the salt feeding-ground—which they naturally prefer, and thrive better upon than any other—to the marshes, rivers, &c.,

of the country, it benefits the inland sportsman; for the few hundreds bagged by the laborious and well-deserving gunners are but as a cup of water to Ullswater, compared with the thousands that visit our coasts every year, and which, for the most part, would remain upon the oozes, if, on their arrival in September and October, when the salt-grass is so luxuriant, they were left undisturbed, and were thus allowed "to gain a settlement;" but as it now is, the immediate and constant pelting of the gunners—and a "pitiless pelting" it is!—propels them into the interior, and fills the decoys, rivers, ponds, &c. During the two seasons I shot in the Tees Bay, never, in human memory, was that place so plagued with supernumerary gunners, or such loud resounding guns; and, for miles around, never was there so many wild fowl shot by inland sportsmen in their regular beats. This I know for fact.

I come now to objection the third, the "poor gunner"—who, as I have seen it somewhere well described, "gains a precarious subsistence by his hard labour." Yes, very "precarious" indeed, I opine! That the fewer shooters there are on a coast, the better will be the shooting, is not to be denied, for birds are never the tamer for being shot at; but the truth of the matter is, that, of late years—excepting those of 1838 and 1840—there have been no very severe winters, nor, indeed, any weather that a gunner would call severe, and it is during rigorous seasons alone that a livelihood can be made by shooting, or, at all events, in confined places. During, therefore, the only time that a common gunner need fear an amateur, but few of the latter will be disposed to show their noses, that is, either at night, or very early in the morning. Besides, at such times—whilst it is day—there is plenty for all, and, sometimes, the more gunners the better shooting. Coast-shooting is hard labour for a single man in a canoe, and what he has no business to undertake, unless he be strong

and healthy—and if he be so, there is nothing he can put his hand to that will not, take one time with another, and in open weather, pay better than coast-shooting. At any rate, this, I am confident, is applicable to ninety-nine gunners in the hundred. But Johnny Raw likes vastly to be called a gunner (!), though he shoots no more birds than will find him in "bacco" and boot-grease! There may be sport for an amateur, but not a livelihood for a common gunner who has no other dependance, unless, indeed, he be a very *un*common common gunner, and withal, a dab at night shooting; and it is hard that a gentleman should lose his sport, because a country fellow prefers paddling a canoe for nothing, to filling a dung-cart for wages; or, in other words, starving in idleness on the water, to thriving by honest industry on land. I know that, of late years, the gunning profession has not answered with the very best gunners in the south, where wild fowl sell the highest, and where this noble science is the best understood; and if they have failed, none else need try. But when the right sort of weather sets in, then, as Buckle says, emphatically and graphically enough, "the hardest dog gets the most birds,"—then (on the southern coast,* at least) we have the

——————————— "ἔθνεα πολλὰ
Χηνῶν ἢ γερὰνων, ἢ κύκνων δουλιχοδείρων,"

of Homer,—and then, but not till then, a common gunner, if he be good for anything, and be tolerably well equipped for the job, may make a living by wild fowl shooting.

The last objection, or evil report, against the loud report created by us brethren of the big, is, that it injures the flight shooters by banishing the birds. And suppose it does, what of that? Are all fair open day shooters to relinquish their sport for the benefit of those who shoot only in the dark? But the truth is just the reverse: for, by driving the

* Appendix, No. 5.

birds from their feeding-grounds, during the day, to the open sea, they come in again, at dusk, as hungry as possible, fly lower, attempt to alight sooner, and are altogether much less wary than they otherwise would be. But by burying their boxes in the very heart of the best feeding-ground, and "blazing away at 'em" till midnight, the flighters themselves ultimately banish the birds; and then, impudently enough, attribute it to "them big guns." Wigeon will bear a good deal of pelting and disturbance, before they will entirely abandon a favourite haunt; but the box system, of which more anon, when thus abused, would exterminate anything!

A letter of mine, in reply to an objector to this noble sport of large gun shooting, appeared in the "Kendal Mercury," in January, 1840, under the signature of "An Old Duck-shooter and Amateur Gunner;" but, after all I have said above on the subject, were I to insert it here, I might, perhaps, fatigue the reader by the length of this article; and, what is worse, by—

DULL MONOTONY.

THE AUTHOR'S REASONS FOR HAVING BECOME A GUNNER.

A BOOK, I believe, is generally considered the more interesting with the author's real name prefixed to it, unless he be some real "great unknown." And by parity of reasoning, having now defended this truly "noble science" against the aspersions with which it is wont to be assailed "by those who know nothing whatever about it," and by whom "it is, therefore, condemned as an occupation for rustics only," I am inclined to hope, nay, more, to believe, that a brief narrative of my own initiation into that science will be deemed neither intrusive, nor altogether uninteresting, by my juvenile friends. At all events, it will serve to show that he who professes to offer them the result of his experience from his youth upwards, has ever been hearty in the cause! A French author of eminence informs us that—"Il y a des gens qui n'avaient jamais été amoreux, s'ils n'avaient jamais entendre parler de l'amour." This breed may be common enough in France; but I apprehend such slow coaches are of rare occurrence in England, and most of all among sportsmen. It is not, however, every man who mounts a scarlet coat and a dapple grey, that is either fond of fox-hunting, or worthy of being called a fox-hunter; neither does the possession of a canoe and large gun give their owner a legitimate claim to the appellation of a gunner; each must first do something, before he can have his good-looking name enrolled in the list of brethren of the brush or of the big.

Early impressions are said to be often strong ones, and more than once in my day I have experienced good proof of the assertion. My first impressions of the beauty of large

gun shooting were peculiarly deep, and I now proceed to tell how and where they were imbibed.

Know ye, then, reader, 'twas on one very particularly fine frosty morning, in the month of December, in the year (I think) 1813, that I, with a large single duck-gun upon one shoulder, a belt containing a quantity of no small shot across the other, together with some prog, duly stowed away in my jacket pocket, and clad in a pair of long water-boots, took a walk of seven miles from the place of my abode to the Humber side. The weather was then, and for some time previously had been, extremely severe. I say it was in the year 1813—Colonel Hawker's work had not then, I believe, seen the light, and, therefore, I had nothing but the light of nature to direct me in my pleasurable toil; and if for large gun shooting I then conceived any relish, that must have been a natural relish! When I reached my destination, the birds were flying in all directions across the oozes, presenting a scene of the liveliest and most exhilarating description. The morning mist had fled before the sun; the birds gleamed, and as flock succeeded flock in quick succession past me, they cut a very pretty figure, whilst I, sometimes up to the knees in mud, did the same. That very loose, and comparatively worthless, mode of shooting—the old-fashioned loose shot plan—was then the order of the day, and of its glorious inefficacy at long distances I had numerous proofs, although I used very large shot, and fired very many rounds, the only bird I killed worth having, being one out of a flock of golden plover, of which there were hundreds, as well as of the grey plover and the knot.* But, hark! reader—harkee! I tell thee the stillness of the scene was broken, at intervals, by a most tremendous roar from stanchion-guns,* in the channel which proceeds from the Humber to Patrington Haven! These reports

* Appendix, No. 6.

roused the birds on all sides, but to my unaccustomed ear conveyed sounds melodious as those of Grecian lyre, or—

"Distant bells along the lake at eve."

I came—I saw—I admired: in a word, though but a little fellow, I resolved to become a big gunner. I know not how it was; but partly from having been absent from the coast—except at brief intervals—for a considerable period; partly from having imbibed the vulgar notion of coast-shooting being "vulgar," and partly from other causes—though I all along retained my smouldering predilection in favour of this glorious sport, and at one time had nearly commenced in good earnest—I never did actually get to work until years afterwards. At length, a perfectly casual circumstance occurred which not only raised the dormant passion within me, but determined me, also, at the first convenient opportunity, to become a gunner. It was this: one day, on entering the late Mr. Egg's shop, No. 1, Colonnade, I beheld a large, single stanchion-gun, all duly fitted up, having a beautiful stub-twist barrel, beautifully browned, and letters in gold withal, in old English character, inlaid upon it. And what think you, reader, were those letters? No other than these—Peter Hawker. Hail, Hawker! Αναξ ανδρων! May'st thou live long, and outlast thy gun!—for to thee, solely, am I indebted for this *addere calcar*—this amiable rekindling in my bosom of gunning (not Greek) fire—this ultimate introduction to the noblest shots these eyes ever beheld! What of thy name in letters of gold—when thou thyself meritest a colossal statue of the same!—embalmed as thou shalt be in the memory of all good brethren of the *trig.* and of the *big*—till dog, duck, gun, and time shall be no more!

Smile not, courteous reader, when I tell thee that, never before having heard of Colonel Hawker, or his work, I, at first,

absolutely took these letters of gold for the name of the gun. It was, to be sure, very silly, for I might have remembered that a gun is always a *she*. I thought, however, of rock-birds,* and hawks, and, at the moment, actually took this most engaging-looking piece for a gigantic instrument to be employed in their destruction. Old Egg, however, soon undeceived me. "What!" said he, with an air of astonishment, "have you never heard of Major Hawker?" "No," replied I. He then handed out a copy of the "Instructions to Young Sportsmen," which I purchased and devoured, as well as two subsequent editions of the same.

And thus, reader, have I explained to thee how, commencing as itinerant porter of shoulder duck-guns, I ultimately became a brother of the *big*.

ON STANCHION-GUNS.

"Vis consilii expers mole ruit suâ."

If a man be ignorant or foolhardy in the adjustment and use of these guns, he may soon find himself—

"Sans teeth, sans eyes, sans everything;"

but, with proper precaution, he is as safe as the Bank, and his gun as capable of large issues. The recoil with a full charge is tremendous; and whenever, or however fixed, the resistance to, or the taking off of that recoil is the grand point to be con-

* For the benefit of the uninitiated it may be stated that the name "Peter" is derived from a Greek word, signifying a "rock."

sidered and effected. Never forget that you have a tiger to chain, and chain that tiger well! Van Amburgh, indeed, may play with a tiger at large, but not with a stanchion-gun. I have conversed with many gunners on various parts of our coast, who had been in the habit of using these guns, and never yet found the man who had not, at one time or other, been more or less punished by them. To some gunners these accidents have proved even fatal; but, in nearly all instances, themselves have been chiefly, if not entirely, to blame. On the southern coast, the nobility, gentry, and mobility have, most of them in their turn, received honourable wounds; some have injured their fingers—some have been compelled to swallow their best ivory frontage—some have fractured their collar bones, &c., whilst others, as we have said, have been killed outright—nay, even Colonel Hawker himself, when he commenced the study of "the noble science," and used short-barreled guns, was, if I was rightly informed, in the receipt of quite sufficient to dictate to him the necessity of some radical reform in fixing these guns, which, in all probability, led to that admirable contrivance of his—the spring-swivel, an invention in gunnery that has never yet been equalled by any gentleman, nor, perhaps, by any gunmaker: more than this it is not very easy to say, and less than this it does not deserve. In short, it is a *sine quâ non* for a very large gun. For without it, I should say, not one gentleman in a hundred would be safe; whilst with it — properly fixed—any one with common care may shoot, not only with impunity, but with the utmost pleasure, confidence, and security.

As this chapter appears rather a short one, as chapters run at present, I will conclude it with a brace of original anecdotes, which the reader, I trust, will not deem irrelevant to our subject.

I may premise that Seaton Carew is a favourite place of resort, during the long vacation, with students of the University of Durham; with some of whom it was my good fortune become acquainted, and, among the rest, with one named Blair, a lineal descendant of the celebrated author of that name. One afternoon a party of us walked down to "the Snook" (of which more hereafter), near Seaton, to take a peep at a vessel which is laid high and dry there, and in which the owner, Benjamin Ord, Esq., an amateur gunner, keeps all his shooting traps extremely snug; so much so, that Blair, having had a good deal of exercise during the day, and having travelled all the previous night on a coach, laid himself at his length on the gun-bench, and pillowing his head with the stock of Mr. Ord's big gun, soon convinced us that the words of the poet were no fiction, but an awful reality:—

"Weariness can snore upon flint and steel!"

After a while, he rose refreshed from his metallic slumber, and as he was standing on the cabin floor, rubbing his eyes, and stretching himself out, Ned Harrison, *alias* "Bold Ned,"* the Greetham gunner, who had just made his appearance, addressed him thus:—

"Pray, Mister Blair, sir, hev you any big guns at Durham?"

"No, Ned," replied this fine young Scotchman, "we have no big guns—but we have some MINOR CANONS!"

The Johnians are renowned as punsters, and Oxford can be facetious at times; but, after this, let no man say that brother Durham is behind the sister Universities in either the MINOR or the MAXIMUM of genuine flashes of wit.

* So called from the fearless manner in which he acquits himself "among sea," in a peculiar-shaped canoe of his own build; a sort of my-grandmother's-slipper, with a pair of wings to it: *risum teneatis!* No model for Keyhaven She!

Sir J. Ross relates that, on one of his crew being asked, "What was the most important event of his life?" he replied that—"he once had shaved the Duke of Devonshire in a storm!" With Ned, the most momentous event is, that once, at a *battue*, at Wyndyard, he had the honour of carrying the Duke of Wellington's gun for a short distance! "When the Duke carried it himself," said Ned, "I *obsarved* that both locks was at full cock!" "Very likely," said I; "the Duke always was a *ready* man in the field, and a gun in his hands is always under the control of a cool head." But Ned was right: it *is* an honour to carry the Duke of Wellington's gun, be the bearer thereof who he may.

STANCHION-GUN BARRELS, LARGE AND SMALL, AND THE BEST MAKERS OF THEM.

My largest stanchion-gun barrel was forged under my own eye, entirely of dray stubs, by the late renowned Tom Fullerd, of London. But poor Tom, like Tom Bowling, Tom Moody, and other matchless Toms, hath now, alas! gone the way of all flesh; and with him hath fallen the once so flourishing establishment in Compton-street.

"Hector's dead!—and Ilion is no more!"

Mr. Daniel and Colonel Hawker have deservedly eulogized the Fullerds, and Tom in particular, as "London barrel-maker-in-chief;" and as the Colonel has also composed the epitaph of the late Joe Manton, I would humbly hope that the ashes of poor Tom, who made so many in his time, will not be permitted to sleep unmemorialized. "Here lies Fuller(d)'s earth," is surely not enough. And, by way of endeavouring

to induce the Colonel, or some other competent person, to take up his pen in last eulogy of this prince of barrel-forgers, my willing muse shall essay a brief epitaph on another celebrated man :—

"No longer seek his merits to descant on,
A noble man lies here—honest John Manton."*

The best advice I have to offer to any modern shooter, desirous of obtaining a first-rate large gun-barrel, is, to get it either direct, or through his gunmaker, from Birmingham, where a good many artists are to be found competent to the undertaking, and, among them, none, perhaps, more so than Mr. John Clive, Mr. Joseph Turner, or Mr. March. Perhaps the best plan is to send a model of the barrel, turned in wood, showing the exact proportions you have decided upon, with exact size of bore, &c.; and it is best to have the barrel fine-bored before it is proved, or leaves Birmingham, as no gunmaker out of that town, at least that I know (except Purdey), has convenience or implements for boring large guns. The reducing, cupping, and touching the plug, are always left for the gunmaker to execute; the barrel-forger never does these things, except at an extra charge; and it is far better to employ your own gunmaker. There may be, and I doubt not there are, many other gunmakers competent to get up a large gun, with Colonel Hawker's apparatus attached to it; but Mr. Purdey of London, and Mr. Edge of Manchester, are the best I know of at present; and it may be observed that these guns cannot be well got up at a small expense.

My large barrel is, I believe, as good a piece of workmanship as ever emanated from the forge of a Fullerd; yet I have reason to imagine that it was about the last of that stamp turned out from the old establishment, which, latterly, was

* Appendix, No. 7.

not what it once was; nor would mine have been the gun it is, but for extra surveillance and extra cost. Whilst, therefore, in justice to the living and the dead, I should recommend that the latest works of Tom be disregarded by the young gunner, who may have a chance of purchase, yet those which bear the initials of William Fullerd, and which can be ascertained to be "undoubted originals," if not internally injured—and the breech should be taken off to examine them—are highly to be prized. They are all forged exclusively of English or foreign stubs, and will stand a proof far beyond that which the proof-house requires. No man ever had a more efficient set of workmen, or was better furnished with the means and appliances for conducting his business, or had greater pride in turning out first-rate workmanship, than the late William Fullerd, who, unfortunately for his brother Tom, died before him, and much too early.

Before I dismiss the present subject, there is one point upon which I deem it necessary to dwell—I allude to what are called the single and double fortified plans of forging large barrels. The single fortification is where a barrel is forged of common iron throughout, except about two feet from the breech end, which is formed of stub iron, twisted. The advantage of this is obvious, inasmuch as the greatest strain, or pressure upon the barrel, is here from the sudden, and, as it were, local expansion of the powder, and where, also, the shot first lifts. The double fortification is where the barrel is, as usual, single twist throughout, but double twisted for a foot or two only, at the breech end. Thus, instead of forging these last two feet in one piece, or spiral, the full thickness required, two lengths of spirals, reversely twisted (those of the intended inside case, to the left; and of the outside case, to the right), are separately forged, and then the joints of each, being separately closed in a welding heat, the two cases being

placed on the mandrel, one above the other, are closely welded together.

But in the forging of my large gun, I went beyond this; for I had it doubly fortified throughout; *i. e.*, from breech to muzzle. In other words, this is encasing and welding together two single-stub reversely-twisted barrels in one. What can burst this? At the same time, in having recourse to this plan, I had another object in view, besides the security of the barrel; I thereby hoped, also, to obtain an inside cleaner from "blacks" and "grays" than is usual in large guns; and in this I certainly succeeded; for no small gun has a more polished inside throughout, or one more entirely free from specks, than my large one. The nearer the hammer the better the iron; because, as the blow is the more forcible there, so are the pores of the iron the most closely condensed; and hence it follows that a barrel forged according to the process just named, must receive the condensing power of the hammer in, at the least, a two-fold degree; and hence, too, when the boring-bit has removed all the "blacks," and begins to taste the best of the iron, just when we have got the bore to the desired size, and the smoothing and finishing process is about to be given to the interior, we have also just reached the very best of the iron, where it is the most desirable that such should be; namely, on the inner side the barrel. We have nearly reached the exterior—or what, before the welding, was the exterior—of the innermost case; have cut within a few shavings of the outer rind of the orange, without having damaged its golden covering; and thus the inside of the barrel will wear like a piece of steel!

But whilst I recommend the double fortification for two feet at the breech-end, for every large stanchion-gun barrel, I do not consider the double fortification throughout of moment to any but the very largest; and then, only, when

you are desirous of having a something highly finished in the large way.

As regards "the loop" belonging to Colonel Hawker's apparatus, this must either be forged on to the barrel, as he himself recommends, or must be fixed on it afterwards; and, for my own part, I prefer the latter. But, whichever plan be adopted, the grand point is, to fix the loop on the proper part of the barrel, so that when the swivel is home in the stanchion, the muzzle-end of the gun shall have a preponderance of, say twenty pounds. Recollect, if the loop be placed too far back, you will need a cannon-metal stock, or loaded butt, to counterbalance the extra weight forwards, so as to enable you to elevate the gun with proper ease; and if the same be placed too far forwards, there will be an injurious preponderance in the opposite extreme, so that the muzzle, instead of resting on the deck, as it ought to do, will always be elevated far above it.

The largest gun-barrel I ever heard of, was manufactured by Mr. March, in Birmingham. It was some nine feet six inches long, some two inches and a half in bore, and weighed three hundred weight; and so *grilling* a job did it prove, that the foreman of the fire assured me "he would not undertake the making another such—not if any one would keep him for nothing for the remainder of his life!" This barrel (intended, I understood, for a very distinguished gunner in the south) was single twist, which, as far as I could learn, the Birmingham forgers (contrary to the Fullerds' and the late Joe Manton's notions) consider preferable to double. All large barrels, when nearly finished as to boring and grinding, should be hammer-hardened for a great length of time; and may afterwards be turned in a sliding lathe.

In forging these ponderous barrels, nothing adds momentum to the fall of the hammer so certainly as double stout,

applied internally, at judicious intervals: for, in all good truth, the employment is nothing else, from first to last, but a combination of the most grilling heat with the hardest labour; it is even worse than anchor-forging, because, in the latter, more time is allowed the hammer-men between "the heats."

STOCK FOR A STANCHION-GUN.

THE best seasoned walnut-wood, cut from the "but," or that part of the stem just above the root of the tree, is the best description of wood for any gun-stock whatever, as it is the best part of the tree, and never shrinks. But as a stanchion-gun stock is so thick, and, therefore, so much less liable than that of a small gun to warp, a piece of best-seasoned ash answers, perhaps, nearly, if not quite, as well for it as walnut. My large gun-stock is of ash, and has stood as firmly as pos-

sible. For a very large gun's stock it is extremely difficult to get a piece of wood, of any kind, sufficiently well-seasoned; nearly all the logs of ash and walnut, cut up for seasoning, being too narrow in dimensions for the purpose, a piece of ash, at a coachmaker's, is, perhaps, the best chance, unless you season your own wood on purpose, which is the most certain

plan. But for a smaller swivel-gun-stock, you may get suited at Birmingham with walnut, or with ash, at any coach-maker's of repute.

The stock, when finished, should have a hole through it sufficiently large to admit a rope-breeching if required; such hole also renders the gun easier to lift, as it affords additional hold to the fingers; and if at any time you be apprehensive of the gun's safety, you may pass one end of a small cord through this hole, tie it tight, and attach a bladder painted red, or some such float, to the other; so that if the gun go to the bottom of a lake, or harbour, you may have a chance of recovering it afterwards.

The cut here given is a correct representation of the stock of my large gun, and which, after various casualties by sea and land, is as good as it ever was. The whole gun was fitted up by Mr. Purdey; and, though it has been overhauled by many scores of individuals—and among them were not a few first-rate sportsmen and gunmakers—but one opinion respecting it has been given. The weight of the stock alone is twenty-one pounds.

LOCK FOR A STANCHION-GUN.

A GUN of this description should always have a back-actioned lock, for reasons already named (page 55); and as the springs of the lock are liable to fly in frosty weather, they should be long, and not too high-tempered. To prevent losing sport, it is advisable to have a duplicate by you, especially as, in case of accident, you may have to send a long distance to get the other lock repaired. The lock-plate should be well

chamfered, to keep the wet out, though a waterproof lock-cover should at all times be used. Springs of any kind, on the outside of a lock to be used on salt water, are objectionable, and particularly so when they cannot be easily got at to be properly cleaned. The lock-plate should be thick, and about half as large again as that for a large shoulder duck-gun, for nothing is more absurd than the common idea, that a large stanchion-gun must have a lock in proportion to its size; hence some of these locks are perfect monsters.

BEST MODE OF IGNITION FOR A STANCHION-GUN.

For "a single swivel-gun," Colonel Hawker tells us that he prefers "a flint lock;" and also states, that "by far the greater proportion of those who constantly use these guns, have decided in favour of the flint;" alleging that "the recoil from the detonator is so sudden as to shake everything too much; and also that the birds, by night, set up their heads at the flash of a priming, just enough to be a much better target, and, therefore, the detonator does not kill so many." I had some conversation on this subject with Buckel, who is quite of opinion that the flint is the better mode of ignition; but *he* fires from the shoulder only; *i. e. d.*, without any breeching or other fixed artificial mode of checking the recoil, and hence considers "that loop and spring-swivel are not only a worse than useless weight in a canoe, but ruinous to a barrel;" and "that knee for the stanchion," and all other contrivances of the sort, as "so much useless lumber"—which, to *him*, they certainly are! He says, "that knee spoils a canoe," and so,

in a measure, it does, inasmuch as it injures its appearance, and adds weight in a bad part for weight to be; moreover, you are, in consequence, compelled to have the punt made heavier.

But *with* the spring-swivel I have no idea (with all deference to such high authorities) of the superiority of the flint over the detonator, because the rope and spiral, combined, gradually and efficiently check the recoil, how sudden soever that may be; and whatever be the shock to a canoe from this cause, we know that, in many instances, it has withstood that shock for years in succession.

The Colonel informs us, he "was obliged to give up the copper-cap to his double gun, as being dangerous in the extreme;" but does not tell us the reason why; and in the absence of any explanation, I am really unable to see the ground of objection, provided the mainspring of the lock be sufficiently strong to prevent any reaction of the cock. There are numerous modern instances of large doubles fired by this mode of ignition, and it is now being very commonly applied to single swivel-guns. But, if it be safe, it is highly objectionable in other points of view, and especially in being—even with the advantage of a large pivot-hole, primed with the finest grained powder—so much less certain of firing than the copper primer, and for the very reason which the Colonel himself gives—the increased length of communication.

Although the gunner's idea of "birds, by night, setting up their heads at the flash of a priming," be a *bright* one, inasmuch as it must be conjectural, still I am willing to believe that the dear ducks—

> "Are sometimes caught with glare;"

and though the ignition of powder in the common flint-lock makes a capital "flare up" at night, still the primer has its vivid flash, sideways, though not so conspicuous as the

former. For my own part, though I like pretty quick ignition, I do not, for large guns, think so much of that as of certainty of firing in all weathers. But the primer combines every advantage; is what I have always used, and prefer, out and out, to all other modes of ignition for swivel-guns, double or single, and however large or small they may be. In short, it is, in every respect, *prime.*

This cut is an exact representation of three copper primers, for the large gun, converted into notes of admiration by the addition of the three dots. But, though this is the plan I have hitherto adopted, I purpose, in future, substituting as neater, cheaper, less noisy, at the least, equally efficient, and not liable to fly—Mr. Edge's eccentric capped-tube primer (see page 45), though, of course, on a somewhat larger scale than that which is adopted for shoulder-guns. The best plan I ever yet discovered for rendering these primers waterproof, is to dip them in molten white wax.

GUNPOWDER FOR STANCHION-GUNS.

For these guns the coarse-grained, or common powder, has been used, from time immemorial, by all big gunners on the coast; nay, so satisfied was Burton, the Seaton gunner, of its superiority over the fine-grained, that he used to sift the less coarse out of even the coarse powder. Moulton always shot with what he called—"coarse, tower-proof, blasting powder." Neither is the strongest powder the best for

large guns. Powder may be made too strong for any gun, and for large ones especially. The fact is, there is a certain standard, or proper quality of powder, and a proper sized grain, for guns of all lengths and sizes of bore; though, probably, it would require a course of nicely-conducted experiments to determine the exact quality and size of grain best adapted for each. For large guns the ignition of the powder should be slower than for small ones; and, therefore, the combustion will be less rapid. Fine powder, of the best and strongest quality, in a large stanchion-gun, not only wastes in loading, by passing out of the touchhole, and often hangs fire, but causes great recoil, with but little execution.

The coarse powder I have, for the most part, used, is what Messrs. Curtis and Harvey call "large grain for boat-guns," and which retains its strength unimpaired for a considerable period, and otherwise leaves nothing to desire. The same firm sent me, also, some of "the government composition," but I preferred the other, chiefly because it produced a redder fire from the muzzle, which I like to see, though the supposition of its superiority, on that account, may be chimerical. I have also found Messrs. Pigou and Co.'s coarse powder admirable; and, without doubt, any of the powder-makers can, if they please, turn out a killing article of the sort.

I prefer glazed to unglazed powder, as being less liable to crumble, and, from having a smooth surface, being better adapted to resist the action of the atmosphere; and as to quickness of ignition, who can distinguish the difference? If any there be—of choice, give me the slowest.

But it may, perhaps, be asked:—Why is powder in coarse grains, and inferior in quality and strength to fine, the best for stanchion-guns? Answer.—The grains being made so much larger, there is a greater quantity of the material covered, or otherwise shielded from the immediate action of fire, con-

sequently, it ignites with much less rapidity than the fine grain, the combustion, also, being slower, from the inferior quality of the compound; from these two causes combined, the explosive power is continued for a greater distance up the barrel, and thus the projectile force is more gradually generated.

To use the finest and strongest powder in a stanchion-gun, is pretty much like using detonating powder in a field-gun, as in both instances the combustion is too rapid for the length of the barrels.

Hence we are taught the propriety of proportioning the size of the grain and the strength of the powder to the length and bore of the barrel; short barrels requiring powder finely granulated, and strong; and longer ones, coarser powder of inferior quality, or reduced strength. And as large-grained powder is better protected from the atmosphere in damp or wet weather, and (on account of the increased weight of each grain) finds its way the more readily down the barrel to the the breech, without being afterwards converted into a paste, by adhering to the sides, it follows, that long barrels loaded with large-grained powder, are both better adapted for shooting in damp or wet weather, and will, at all times, kill farther than the same loaded with fine powder.

DUCK-SHOT FOR LARGE SWIVEL-GUNS.

With respect to shot for these guns, there are two momentous errors into which all novices, and not a few regular gunners, are wont to fall;—the one as to the *quantity*, the other as to the *size* of shot best adapted for them. The

majority suppose that they not only will carry, but will require a far heavier charge than really is the case, and that they cannot shoot small shot well, and therefore must at the least be loaded with slugs. But the fact is, such is the advantage of a long barrel, with a large bore and coarse powder, that it will shoot all sorts and sizes of even loose shot better than a small gun. I am quite confident that, with a large and good shooting stanchion-gun, more birds are to be bagged at from seventy-five* to ninety, if not to one hundred yards, with No. 2, or, perhaps, with even No. 3, than with shot of a larger size. But, recollect, I am speaking now of Eley's patent cartridges.

A person not acquainted with these guns might be excused for supposing that, with shot so small in comparison, they would cut up the birds too much; this, however, is not the case, for at eighty-five or ninety yards a stanchion-gun will not shoot loose shot thicker than a shoulder-gun at forty, though the shot will, of course, be regularly spread over an infinitely wider space in the former instance than in the latter; it is not, therefore, that any one bird gets so much more shot, as that far more birds are killed.

Buckel and his ancestors have always preferred No. 1, loose, to shot of a larger size; and Moulton told me that all his life long he had been accustomed to use No. 1 during the early part of the season, alleging that "the birds were then tamer, their feathers softer, and that there were more small (young) birds about." Now No. 2, in Eley's cartridge, is, at the least, equivalent to No. 1 in a loose state, shoot where and when you may.

Thus we discover, contrary to the general idea, that for killing wild fowl—provided Eley's cartridges be used—small shot is the best in large guns, and large in small.

* Up to seventy-five or eighty yards, loose shot is preferable to any other kind of charge for a stanchion-gun.

There are, however, some exceptions in the former instance, such as the state of the weather as regards the wind, the state of the birds as to their being wild or tame, and the situation they may happen to be in when you are about to go up to, and fire at them; for the birds may sit well, and yet, from the shallow state of the water, you may not be able to near them. Not a little, also, depends upon the shooting of the gun, as a weak or soft-shooting one will not do justice to small shot. To come to a scale, then,

For day shooting, up to 100 yards, No. 1 or 2, Eley.
Ditto, from 100 to 120 yards, No. 1 or B.
Ditto, from 120 to 140 yards, 3 A.

I would recommend 3 A, Eley, for geese, or even for swans, up to 120 or 130 yards, and beyond this, S.S.G., Eley, though made to go very easily down the barrel, and with larger meshes, and these only half way down the cage, as Mr. Eley made them for me. These cartridges were marked outside, *O. B.*, and I have known them shoot beautifully at very long distances. A very open spiral cartridge, I should imagine, might act well here.

PATENT WIRE SHOT-CARTRIDGES.

Although it may appear somewhat singular, yet the meshes of these wire cartridges, for both very large and very small bored guns, require to be larger than those for guns of a medium size.

Cartridges always act best in large-bored guns. If a man possess a very heavy shoulder-gun, with a bore small in proportion to its weight, he certainly may fire a cartridge con-

taining a large charge of shot, but not with such killing effect as a lighter cartridge of larger diameter, in a gun of equal weight, but of wider bore, because, in the former instance, the cartridge will be too long in proportion to its diameter; hence it will not fly so true; and being also narrower at the bottom, does not receive the force of the powder so fully as the other; and, therefore, though the quantity of shot be less, it displays a better pattern on the target, because it is driven with more force, and in a straighter direction.

My large gun will carry two pounds of loose shot, though I rarely use more than one, and sometimes less; but when the shot is confined in a wire-cartridge, properly made; *i. e.*, having all the interstices filled up with bone-dust to the very top, and a little powdering of dust over that; eighteen ounces, at the utmost, cannot be exceeded without destroying the proportions of the cartridge. If, with a view to preserving those proportions, and, at the same time, increasing the quantity of the shot, either the quantity of dust be reduced in the cartridge, or a portion of the shot be placed without dust on the top of it, the effect of the shooting is thereby materially injured.

I once had an idea that the shorter a cartridge was, in any reasonable degree, the better it would shoot; but found that this was rushing into an injurious extreme; because as this projectile, in its flight, gradually disperses the shot through the meshes, a certain number of rows of these are absolutely essential. At the same time, if there be a departure from the medium, a cartridge had better be too short than too long.

I have tried all sorts of experiments with cartridges of all sizes and descriptions, at both targets and flocks of wild fowl, and many a hundred birds have I lost by so doing; but as an Englishman, after having traversed the globe, returns to discover that there is nothing like "England, home, and beauty,"

so, after a tedious round of experiments, I came, at last, to the conclusion—which, in fact, I set out with, and never really doubted—that nothing could beat Eley's old red cartridges, or his direction for using them; namely, "let them slide easily down the barrel." If they fit tight, or even tight*ish*, they are very liable to ball—the wire, I suppose, not then cutting the paper;—and if they even slide easily down the barrel, they will not always bear a wadding upon them without balling; but if they go down the barrel quite loosely, they will then bear a wadding upon them; at least they do so in my large gun, and thus shoot remarkably well. And as guns, accordingly as they are bored, are apt to vary a little in carrying cartridges, it may be advisable, with any new large gun, to try both the above plans, which are decidedly the best two going, if they be not the only good ones. They should *always* be well rammed.

I certainly made some singularly long shots with certain wire-cartridges, of thinner wire, and smaller meshes than usual, which Mr. Eley made at my request, but they were very uncertain, and, therefore, very unfit for regular work.

Spiral wire-cartridges do not deliver the shot with certainty; but for very long shots on the coast, they would, no doubt, occasionally be found efficacious.

TALLOW-CARTRIDGES.

From the first appearance of Eley's cartridges I was so perfectly satisfied with the red ones, that I could fancy no other for any gun, large or small. True it was, I heard them

abused very often; but still, through evil and good report, I persevered in their use; as, with me—

"No argument like matter of fact is;"

and the silent eloquence of iron targets, and of dead teal, spoke more than books or language. Hence I had used these patent projectiles exclusively in stanchion-gun shooting for some time before I could bring myself to try tallow ones; especially as I had previously found Eley's tallow wire-cartridges for small guns a complete failure. At length I received the following formula for making them, from an intelligent gunning-friend, which determined me to give them a full trial:—

"Take a wood-former [model], turned like a ruler, and rather concave at each end, the right size for the bore; cut thin cartridge-paper, so as to go once or twice round, and paste it with paste made from alum-water; then let these cases dry, and do them over with paste, to keep the grease from running through. Be sure you use alum, as the paper breaks and remains in the gun, and the alum prevents it from taking fire. Place the cartridges upright, with the shot in them, and shake the shot well down till it is level at the top, by tapping the bottom of each cartridge a few times gently on the table. Get some tallow, or hard mutton suet; melt it in a saucepan, and, with a small ladle, pour in the fat; let it settle; then pour in more till the shot is just covered. Tie them up with a paper cap over the shot. They are sure to burst, are convenient, and shoot capitally. Remember to sponge out the gun after firing, as the paper remains in the gun. I found shot a size larger than No. 1 the best."

In the manufacture of my tallow-cartridges I proceeded thus. Having folded in, and pasted the bottoms of the cartridge cases, I then, with a wadding punch of the proper diameter, cut a round of the thickest cartridge paper, and pasted this on the bottom of each case, and, when perfectly dry, placed the cases, filled with shot, to within three quarters of an inch of the top, to allow for after folding in, in pewter cylinders, prior to pouring in the melted suet, which is pre-

ferable to tallow, inasmuch as it sets harder. The more frequently suet is melted, the softer it becomes; but, in melting it, don't let it remain too long upon the fire, otherwise it boils, becomes dark-coloured, and scorches the paper. So long as it be not a tight fit, the cartridge, when cold, cannot fit the barrel too closely; as the closer the fit the less the cartridge shakes against the sides of the barrel in its passage out, and the more fully does it receive the propulsive force of the powder. It is their compactness, density, and allowance, without the risk of balling, of so much tighter fit in the gun than Eley's cartridges, which makes them shoot so well; and though the patent ones have still decidedly the advantage, not only in distant shooting, but in never leaving any portion of the paper case in the gun, still their superiority is not near so great as is that of the tallow ones over loose shot. And, like my friend, I found B the size of shot the best adapted for them.

In loading, I always rammed the wadding on these cartridges rather lightly, in order to preserve their form, as shot, embedded in grease only, is soon displaced by hard ramming, and, in numerous trials, I never witnessed a single instance of these cartridges balling. But, as the tallow itself weighs heavy, especially when large shot is used—for then the interstices are greater—a proportionate weight of shot must be deducted from the usual charge; and still these cartridges will occasion more recoil than the patent ones of similar weight. And as for shot confined in both tallow and wire, though such cartridges will, now and then, kill at very long distances, they are not only very liable to ball, but, unless you reduce the weight of the charge very much, to jar the skipper's head in the recoil as he lies on his back in the canoe, and, if persevered in, they would shake her every plank loose.

Mr. Babbage, in his "Economy of Machinery," speaking

of the force with which gunpowder acts on resisting bodies, very justly observes: "If a gun be loaded with ball it will not kick so much as when loaded with small shot; and among different kinds of shot that which is the smallest, causes the greatest recoil against the shoulder. A gun loaded with a quantity of sand, equal in weight to a charge of snipe-shot, kicks still more." And he appears to think that this "may arise, in some measure, from the condensation of the air contained between their particles; but chiefly from the velocity communicated by the explosion to those particles of the substances in immediate contact with the powder being greater than that with which a wave can be transmitted through them. It likewise (he adds) affords a reason for the success of a method of blasting rocks, by filling the upper part of the hole above the powder with sand, instead of clay rammed hard."

Whether or not this doctrine explain the cause of the severer recoil occasioned by shot, confined both in tallow and wire meshes, I leave to the more philosophic to determine; but the fact is indisputable.

Fragments of paper being left in the barrel, which frequently occurs, is, certainly, a serious objection to these tallow-cartridges, not only, principally, from the danger of a latent spark, but, also, from the chance of the paper lodging in the chamber, or centre-hole. But by using the alum, as described above; by wiping the gun out twice after every discharge; by first inserting a small portion of powder in the centre-hole, with a loading-spoon, and then withdrawing the rod and putting in the remainder of the charge, the chances of danger, if not wholly removed, will, at the least, be considerably reduced.

But as I myself have always used Eley's cartridges, so do I most strenuously recommend them to all gunners, as in-

comparably superior to all other plans of loading with shot; unless it be in some retired spots, and where are they (?) where the gunner has all the shooting, or nearly so, to himself, when he may occasionally use mutton-cartridges, or loose shot, to the best advantage.

WADDING FOR A STANCHION-GUN.

For this purpose, some of the old gunners have always preferred oakum, either "twisted, and then screwed into the barrel," or "formed into a ball;" and one whom I know, contends that "it is the very best wadding for all guns." The best oakum is that cut from the ends of new rope. Colonel Hawker is also high in the praise of "a tight-wound ball, of the very best picked oakum." With me, the result of very extensive trials, far too numerous to mention, was that, as of all good kinds of wadding, these balls are by far the cheapest, and nearly as good as the best, they may (with an addition yet to be named) be considered the best for general use. At one time I had nearly made up my mind that they *must* be superior to every other kind of wadding, for promoting strength and closeness of shooting; but subsequent events convinced me that I had been misled by specious theories of my own imagining, rather than by the less seductive, but more certain results, of patient practical investigation. In target shooting, at ninety or one hundred yards, I frequently observed that this wadding came up with the shot, and left its impression on the white-washed surface, from which it might often be seen rebounding to a considerable distance. Several of

these rebounders were picked up, and I could name a gallant Colonel, who once stood to witness my target trials, who has [alas! I must now say had, for, whilst this work has been passing through the press, he has left us to lament his loss,] some of them still in his possession. Their form is by no means globular, as when first rammed down the barrel; on the contrary, they are closely compressed as pasteboard; that side which was next the shot, and which shows indents from it, being rather concave, whilst the other side contains more of its original convexity of form. In this state the rebounders just fit the bore nicely, and are altogether so compact and well formed, that, if they could be moulded into this shape, by artificial means, I should much prefer them, as wadding, to to those of a globular form. On going to collect the birds, too, after a shot on the sand, I have sometimes been astonished to find the wadding smoking like a little chimney among them. Hence I was imbued with the persuasion that this wadding must exert a more powerful and protracted effect than ordinary upon the shot; because, whilst other waddings seldom went half the distance, and were then, for the most part, blown in pieces, *this* both improved in form, and seemed to fly almost as far as the shot itself. Such result, however, was exclusively attributable to the solidity and weight of the wound-ball thus compressed by the explosion; and I now feel satisfied that the instant the shot quits the muzzle, the wadding has no further influence upon it, be that wadding what it may.

As I had long known felt to be the best wadding for large shoulder-guns, I adopted it, from the very commencement of my big gun career, but found it necessary to use two punched waddings, sewed together in the centre, and the dark, drab-coloured felt is preferable to that of a yellow cast. The edges were saturated with the usual anti-

friction compound.* From repeated target experiments, as well as from constant observation of their respective effects among wild fowl, both myself and my attendant felt confident of the superiority of the double felt waddings over the oakum balls; they also pack in a smaller compass, yield more easily to the ramrod—a great point when loading afloat—and, from being punched, are always certain of being the proper size exactly; but then they are several shillings, whilst oakum is but threepence or fourpence a pound!

After having finally decided the superiority of double felt over naked oakum balls, and the great excellence of both, I received a letter from Purdey, speaking in the highest terms of a new wadding he had recently invented and tried for punt-guns; and of which, at the same time, he sent some specimens adapted to my large gun. These were made of cork, cut thick, sewed up in flannel, and saturated, *a la felt*, at the edges. I have elsewhere observed that cork has long been known as one of the very best of waddings; its advantages are—its lightness; its forming an even surface; its natural elasticity causing it to fit the barrel hermetically tight; and its bearing the explosion of the powder, for the most part (though not always, and *that* was its principal defect), without splitting. I therefore at once saw the remedy provided by Purdey's new flannel jacket; and so well does it secure the cork from breaking, that, after having fired on the water, you may generally observe the naked round of cork (or bung) floating, uninjured, on the surface, and you will do well to pick it up, as it will answer again, as well as ever, when fresh enveloped in woollen, and greased at the edges as before. I never did try these waddings at a target; but from their very

* Hog's-lard and mercury: a very useful application, the grease keeps the gun clean, and the mercury amalgamates the lead, and prevents singeing.

superior performances on the water, both with cartridges and loose shot, feel satisfied in my own mind, that they are the very best of waddings for a large gun. So much did I approve of the flannel covering, that, after having flattened the oakum balls on an anvil, by means of a heavy-headed hammer, I sewed them up in the same thin flannel as the cork, and greased the edges. The naked oakum balls, some suppose, smear the barrel with tar; at all events, they are very apt to unwind, and thus to get entangled with each other; they also are apt to get loose in the barrel among the shot; but the jacket cures all this, makes the wadding go much more easily down the barrel, keeps it cleaner, prevents leading, and so much improves the shooting, as to render these waddings, as I said above, the best for general use; though, on choice, I should prefer the double felt to this covered oakum, and the covered cork to either. It is worthy of note, that, when this last-named wadding is used, there are always more grains of the (coarse) powder forced out at the touchhole, than by any other wadding; and, therefore, in all probability, it is driven more efficiently home; and if wet get into the barrel, it is also observable that the cork keeps it from the powder; in other words, it bottles the powder tight in the barrel, whilst the flannel, being of a spongy nature, causes the cork, if possible, to swell out the more.

As for the wadding over the shot, *that* is always of less moment; a single round of stout, punched pasteboard, may answer; but Purdey's prepared wadding, when made three-sixteenths of an inch thick, is the best; and it may be added that, when three of these are sewed together, they make a very efficient wadding to place upon the powder, especially if they fit the muzzle rather tightly, to allow for the opening at the breech, if any there be.

THE PROPER CHARGE FOR STANCHION-GUNS.

As these guns are, or ought to be, wiped out twice after every shot, there is not the same objection to the constant use of a *full* charge of powder in them, as in the common fowling-piece. When, therefore, the gunner has discovered, by target trials, the *best* charge for his gun, at point-blank distance—say from ninety to one hundred yards—he can, if he please, use that invariably. With the rope and spring-swivel, a full charge can always be fired with ease and safety, and it is absurd to carry a heavy gun in a canoe, if a man be determined to underload it always, and thus to place it on an equality only with one of small dimensions. I am perfectly aware of the extreme folly of using an excessive charge of shot; yet still there is reason in everything, and I would not wantonly rush into the opposite extreme, though, of the two, it be the least evil. The best charge of shot for a gun will never be found to be the heaviest; but, in my opinion, will always be found the most destructive, on the whole, or at all events for a swivel-gun. And even admitting a smaller charge of shot (with, or without an increase of powder) to be the more killing at very long distances, I have elsewhere shown that such shots do not become the gunner, though, if such be his object exclusively—then, doubtless, a reduction in weight of lead will improve his chance.

LOADING A LARGE GUN.

" Whatever is worth doing at all is worth doing well."—Old Saw.

The first and the grand point, in loading a large gun, is, if possible, to get the *whole* charge of powder to the very bottom of the chamber, without scattering a single grain elsewhere. But whatever plan be adopted in order to effect this, I think it of great consequence to mention that there is one form of the patent breech superior, in my opinion, to all others for swivel-guns, and which I adopted for mine. The chamber, or centre-hole of this breech, every one knows, is cylindrical throughout, and angular at the top. Now these angles ought to be entirely rounded off, in a lathe, with a gradual taper, half way down the cylinder (any gunmaker will understand what I mean by this, should the young gunner be at a loss); when it will be quite apparent that coarse gunning powder will be much more likely than before to find its way readily home to the bottom of the chamber, especially if the gun have been fouled by much firing: and it must be borne in mind that the muzzle of a stanchion-gun, fixed in a canoe, cannot be elevated beyond a moderate degree of inclination. As for any little decrease of explosive force which this alteration may occasion, it is as nothing when compared with the misfires thus prevented. A large gun can afford to give away a little *brutum fulmen*, without any perceptible diminution of its killing properties.

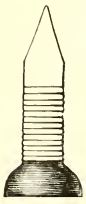
But now to the actual loading of it. You have fired; have collected your birds, and have stowed them away; and, if you be desirous to prevent the nuisance of a misfire, let this rule

be deeply engraven on the tablets of your memory; viz, *wipe your gun out twice, as soon after you have fired as you can!* The skipper will generally have an opportunity of doing this whilst you are in pursuit of the cripples. It may not be convenient to you to reload her just then—but, no matter—*wipe her out* at all events, and plug the muzzle; and if from any cause you either neglect this whilst the barrel is damp from the previous discharge, or—as in the case of the sudden approach of bad weather—are compelled to postpone it, you should always flush off a little powder with a wadding upon it, and wipe her out twice before you load again; otherwise the flakes, or crusts, dislodged, and forced downwards with the ramrod, will, in all probability, choke up the antechamber, and occasion a misfire; and, after you have rowed a couple of miles to a fine flock, and have, at length, got within shot of them, a misfire is "no joke." A couple of *dead snaps* at a fine cock-pheasant, and especially in a country where such birds are rare, is by no means agreeable; but I would rather my field-popper refused to go off for a whole day, than experience one such disappointment as I have just named in wild fowl shooting. Mr. Ord's gun missed fire at by far the finest shot of duck and wigeon, mixed together, which the oldest gunners in the Tees Bay ever recollect to have seen. I was just in time to be too late to get a peep at it myself, but from what he himself told me, and from all I heard, should say that a gunner might venture to give the better half of a ten-pound note, for the chance of another such shot, without incurring any danger of being a loser by the bargain.

GUN-RODS AND LOADING-SPOONS.

The best and most durable though the most expensive kind of gun-rod for a large gun is made of ash, is brass mounted, and screws into two equal parts for the sake of portability; is fur-

nished with jagged heads, double and single spring steel worms, small probe, jagged heads and worm for chamber, &c., all of which may be screwed in and out at the top of the rod at pleasure. In fact, the gunmaker's cleaning-rod is an exact representation in miniature of this large rod, with one exception only; viz., that the bottom of the latter is formed thus—with a brass ramrod head; so that this same rod answers for *cleaning*, *wiping*, *ramming*, and *drawing-out*, and (if your copper loading-spoon be made with *a screw* at the end) for *loading* also, and, therefore, for *all* purposes. It may also be remarked, that this ramrod head gives you much more power in drawing the rod out of the barrel, when the tow proves a too tight fit. And now, having unscrewed the joint of this gun-rod, and put the several articles belonging to it into the ammunition-box—enclose the two parts in a waterproof covering, or a patent leather case, when it is ready to occupy its place under the front deck of the canoe.



The other kind of gun-rod—and I always take one of these out with me, whether I take the best rod or not—as cheap and plain as you need desire, is to be had of any carpenter, and answers very well, either made of deal or ash, though the latter is preferable, as the projections of the jagged-head are not so liable to be knocked off. Procure a rod of the requisite length, like the handle of a hay-rake, and then, with *a brass jagged-head before you as a pattern*, and a sharp chisel, or pocket-knife, cut a *fac-simile* of it. Bore a gimlet-hole at the other end of the rod, a little smaller than the screws of your steel worms, &c., and stop it with cork, to prevent the sand, mud, &c., from getting in; over this the socket of your loading-spoon fits rather tightly, and admits of removal at pleasure: and thus does this simple rod answer all the purposes of the other.

All gun-rods for large guns should be free from knots, and be made, at the least, a foot longer than the barrel, to give handle-hold to two persons, in case the tow wedge very tightly in the barrel; and these common rods should be longer still, because, in the event of one head breaking, your knife and ingenuity will soon supply another.

The loading-spoon plan I borrowed from Colonel Hawker's work, where it is fully described and illustrated by a cut; it is infinitely superior to all others that I am acquainted with. The Colonel has his loading-spoon fixed or rivetted to the end of the rod; but I prefer it detached, because it is then the more easily kept clean inside and out, and is far less liable to be bulged or put out of form. I keep mine in the ammunition-box, where it cannot be injured, and where it has the additional advantage of being always dry and free from sand, &c. I shall ever prefer the detached to the fixed loading-spoon; and have an equal objection to fixed worms, as being not only more liable to rust and injure themselves, but also to wound the hand, tear the sail, &c.; besides, with care, it is not often that the use of one is required. By having a duplicate loading-spoon you have always a clean one to take out with you, which delivers the powder freely.

When you push your gun-rod under deck, let it be with the handle foremost, as the jagged-head is thus the less liable to be injured.

WIPING OUT THE GUN.

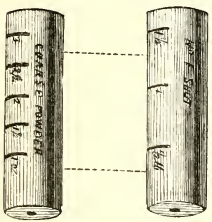
When the canoe is drawn up ashore, you have only to raise the barrel to a level, or to put the stem-piece on, when one man may manage to wipe her out, and, indeed, to load with more ease than two can afloat, because the gun and canoe are then kept firm and steady, and the man has so much more power on land than when standing on deck. It is, there-

fore, always the best to go ashore to load, when you are not too far from land. The mode of procedure, after having wiped the gun out once, is to turn the same piece of tow, or oakum, inside out, and wipe her out again; and, lastly, to heave it overboard; otherwise, when once moistened with the spray, or rain, it will stain everything it touches.

When afloat, it is, generally, best for you to keep as far aft as you can, whilst the man stands forward on the deck, and, with the stem-piece on, the gun is pretty conveniently elevated for wiping out with a common rod.

PUTTING THE POWDER INTO THE GUN.

Whilst the skipper is engaged in wiping out the gun, you are selecting what you want from the ammunition-box; then he, keeping hold of the jagged end of the rod, reaches the other to you, who are now standing or kneeling close to the gun-stock. You instantly fix on the loading-spoon sufficiently tight, and pour in the charge of powder—say from such a measure as the annexed brass one, which, when notched on both sides, shows the exact quantity of the powder on one side, and that of the shot on the other. This he gently draws to him, and inserts in the barrel, and, having deposited the powder, withdraws the rod, and reaches it to you, who take off the spoon and replace it in the ammunition-box.



If the water be smooth, as soon as the loading-spoon is at the bottom of the barrel, you can press down the but and give it a stroke or two on the floor, which will help to shake out the powder; but, otherwise, the farther aft you get the better—especially as he can elevate the muzzle, and strike the stock on the boards, which will have the same effect as your

depressing the stock. When the water is smooth, if you raise the gun-stock a little, and hold it steadily between your knees, and he the barrel between his legs, the gun may thus be loaded in an horizontal position; but, in rough water, he must load with the stem-piece *on;* and, even then, very little of the powder* will be scattered as the rod goes down the barrel; and a flannel-coated or felt wadding sweeps all home before it. But, I repeat, always go on shore, or, at all events, into shoal-water, to load, when you conveniently can; for though you *can* always load afloat, when it is fit for you to be out at all, yet you can manage the matter with far greater ease and expedition on shore.

A somewhat singular case occurred to me, in wild fowl shooting, on the water. After three misfires in succession, at fine flocks of birds, myself and my attendant began to suspect that all was not right within; and, on drawing the gun, discovered that the onion-seed was wanting! Now that one individual, who has but his own head and one pair of eyes to trust to, may, under certain circumstances—such as being in love (when, indeed, it is dangerous for any man to go afloat in a canoe), in a hurry, or desperately vexed at his own bad shooting—be guilty of such error, is easy enough to imagine; but that two people, in one small canoe, and whose united efforts are absolutely necessary in loading when on the water, should *both* make so egregious a blunder, is passing strange. Nevertheless, such a thing might occur once in two years; and for once—though *but* for once during that period—did occur to us. At the same time, let no one laugh immoderately at this, for I could relate some remarkable particulars of an oblivious nature, which have occurred to brother amateurs, staunch adherents to the stanchion-gun. And though such

* The powder might be enclosed in cartridges of thin worsted crape, for windy weather, or night-work. The tube would fire through all.

absent feats, when known, may subject the gunner to the smiles of his brethren of the trigger, still, after all, "it is fact," there is nothing positively dangerous in omitting the powder.

WADDING ON THE POWDER.

When loading afloat, if the skipper have not taken a wadding for the powder in his pocket, you must hand him one; and it must be of a kind that goes down the barrel without much forcing, as a man thus ticklishly located, and having enough to do to preserve his balance, is unable to exert anything like the power he can do when on shore. The reader may, possibly, deem me frivolously minute; but when, on one occasion, I was using cork waddings, which fit rather tight—though easily enough rammed home when ashore—so much time was consumed in forcing them, inch by inch, down the barrel, when loading afloat, that two excellent shots were thereby lost, either of which would, in all probability, have brought as many dead birds to the canoe as would have paid for a copy of this highly interesting volume. Perhaps some one will declare that common sense will teach a man all these things. Very likely so, in process of time! But common sense is not always the clever fellow that some people take him for; nor is he always "at home" in a canoe.

PUTTING THE SHOT INTO THE GUN.

If shot be used in a *loose* state, you can hand your man a pound of it in a wooden measure just fitting for two inches or so into the muzzle, which he elevates as much as possible, giving the but a smart shake or two on the bottom of the canoe; a punched wadding follows, which keeps all tight. And here I may observe, that the ramrod should have a ring or two filed round it, or a notch or two cut in it, by which

means you can see by day, and feel by night, when the charge is properly home.

Any description of cartridge is easily disposed of, as you have only to place a wadding—if you use one at all—at the top of it, and to ram both down at once. But it may be as well to name that, whilst other cartridges may be put down the barrel either end foremost, without their shooting being much affected thereby, Eley's have a top and bottom; and if *they* be put down the barrel wrong end foremost, the shooting is thereby materially altered for the worse. The best plan, therefore, is to stain each cartridge black at the top for about an inch downwards, so that the man will see at once which is the proper end to go foremost down the barrel. Of course, the other end, and not the black one, must go in first. Whenever you hand a cartridge to the man, if you use a wadding, recollect first to place that on the top, and give it to him in that state, when he will ram both down at once, and "no mistake," or chance of it. But if you leave him to load whilst you are chasing cripples on the sand, the black hood instantly directs him how to deal with the cartridge.

Quickness without hurry, and readiness without confusion, are capital points in gunning. Whatever, therefore, adds in any way to expedition or to your convenience—how insignificant soever in itself that may appear—is, in reality, one among the number of those little things which none but a fool would despise. You thereby gain time, and the saving of even a single minute will often prove of the greatest consequence to a gunner. "Had I been but a minute sooner," said a gunner to me one day, "I should have had a fine shot off yonder sand end; but, as it was, that d—d steamer raised the whole." The hunter is "thrown out," but finds the hounds and resumes his place again; but the flock which passes within shot

of that sleepy gunner who is taking his own time in loading—like the time itself he has thus lost—never returns.

PRIMING THE GUN.

The moment the gun is reloaded, the first thing to be attended to, is to examine the touchhole, and if no grain or grains of powder be discoverable, either externally or internally, it is an ill omen, and, to say the best, her chance of exploding is extremely dubious. In such case your surest and best plan will be to lift the swivel out of the hole, and having placed the gun sidewise on a level, with the lock uppermost, probe the touchhole with a piece of sharp-pointed brass wire, and pour in, from a small pistol powder-flask, with conical top, some of the best fine-grained powder, and keep striking the stock with the palm of your hand to shake the powder well home: when quite full, press the point of your forefinger upon the touchhole, and blow the rest of the powder away. Then with the point of the wire clean out the mouth of the touchhole for about the thirty-second part of an inch, and prime the gun with the copper tube. After this process, she may hang fire a little, but is pretty certain to go off; but, if after this you have a single misfire, trust her no more, but immediately snap her off with a fresh primer, withdrawing the cartridge first, if you please; and if she miss again, the sooner you go ashore, draw the gun, flash her off, and reload, the better. On such occasions, by means of the large worm, or, if not, of the small one,* which also screws into the loading-

* This little worm for drawing out any substance which may have got lodged in the chamber, as well as a small brass jagged-head for cleaning it out when required, should be made to go rather easy into, and fairly to the bottom of it. And, N.B., as both these articles have to be specially made for this purpose, take care to see them fitted to the chamber before the plug is finally screwed in, or, at all events, caution the gunmaker to do so.

rod, you will be certain to discover some cause of stoppage to the free course of the powder into the antechamber. Perhaps a piece of a tallow cartridge-case may have caused the obstruction; perhaps a piece of wadding; more generally a piece of tow or oakum will be found to have slipped from the rod in wiping out; and strange though it may seem, the total absence of gunpowder, as has been already shown, will, now and then, be thus proved to have been the cause of failure!

But if, on examination of the touchhole, even a single grain of powder be apparent, with a good primer, she is as certain to fire as that you pull the trigger.

DESCRIPTION OF THE DIFFERENT KINDS OF GUNNING PUNTS, CANOES, AND GUN-BOATS

USED ON VARIOUS PARTS OF THE BRITISH COAST.

Μικρα μεν εργα ταδ ἐστιν, εχει δ' ηδειαν οπωπην.—ANTHOLOGIA.

THE FLOAT.

THE simplest of all sporting canoes is that yclept a float; which, in fact, is nothing more than a rafter of thin boards brought to a point at each end, and with sides so low as scarcely to conceal the shooter when laid at full length. The whole float, I believe, may be manufactured out of a twenty-foot three-inch deal. These primitive barks were in vogue, some years ago, in Wexford Harbour; but, of course, no amateurs would be fools enough to put to sea in such shallow affairs.

THE POOL CANOE,

Built exclusively for the purpose of shooting from the creeks, with a large shoulder-gun, is fully and doubtless correctly described by Colonel Hawker. A few years ago, I saw numbers of these canoes on the beach at Pool, and found the principal gunners there high in their praises; which, however, did not alter my own opinion respecting them. Since then, our Mentor has thrown new light on this branch of wild fowl shooting, by the invention of a "New Light Punt for Shoulder-Guns," and which, beyond all doubt, is the best suited of all others for the creeks. See "Instructions to Young Sportsmen," eighth edition, p. 367.

THE LYNN AND BOSTON GUN-BOAT, OR SHOUT.

Under this head may be classed the canoes of nearly all the gunners round the British coast, except those of the southern coast, yet to be described. The best are built at Lynn, in Norfolk, where are several good hands; but, of all others, Mr. John Mann is *the* man for turning one out in the most modern and approved style. These "gun-boats" present some points worthy the gunner's notice, and if decked forward, would, at times, prove very destructive craft. They are about eighteen feet long, are clencher built, and always have the first stroke from the bottom of elm, because it "stands the nailing," or holds the fastenings, better than fir, which is so apt to split. The rest of the boat is constructed of thin red deal, with ash timbers, though many build them entirely of withy, or willow, which is far lighter than even white pine, and, indeed, when well-seasoned, is, by most gunners, considered the best of all wood for building any single-handed canoe. They are quite flat-bottomed, and being proportionately wide amidships, light, and high-sided, will live in a good deal of sea: although they show more conspicuously

than our decked canoes, yet they can be built so as to be lighter than any decked canoe. The Lynn gunners are not a little conceited about these their "gun-boats," and consider no others fit to be named with them. In working them, they sometimes stand erect and push them forwards, Charon-wise,* with a pole only; or else kneeling on a thwart, towards the stern, yet facing the bow, propel them by means of a double paddle; and when thus engaged, they might, at a distance, be mistaken by a person chivalrously disposed, for little wind-mills. They contend, and not without colour of reason, that by thus facing the stern, they can manage the boat better in a sea than a person who sits with his back to it can do. In going up to birds in very deep water, they use short, broad paddles; in medium water, "stalking-sticks," or long, narrow paddles; and in either, at times, the Lynn "long paddle," nine feet long, with which, with one hand only, they both push along and—by feather-edging the paddle—steer, thereby making less show than when using short paddles on both sides. This long paddle is a capital one, and one of the few wrinkles to be caught from the gun-boat system of "The Lynnean Society."

In the colour of either their dress, or of the craft which bears them, these our gun-boaters are by no means "nice to a shade;" a black velvet shooting-jacket being, apparently, the order of the day. They contend that colour is of no moment, "when birds is cadey," hence they are strangers to the more finished points of coast-shooting.

These boats appeared to me to be the best adapted for pretty smooth and shallow water, as none float in less, if in so little. With one of these Lynn canoes before them, as far as lightness and neatness go, I would back Messrs. Chandler and Hunt to construct the best canoe of foreign spruce, the mate-

* "Ipse conto ratem subigit."—Virgil.

rial of which their celebrated gig was built in the spring of 1840; but such canoe, though useful in smooth and shallow water, would do nothing in a sea, compared with the decked ones about to be described.

These Lynn men obtain elevation for their guns by means of three notches cut, one above the other, in a cross-piece close to the stem, which, being lowered to suit the lowest level, renders these boats much more liable than decked ones to take in water forward.

To "the art of shooting flying" they make no pretension. Their gunstocks are shaped with a pistol bend, so that, in firing, the friction of the stock at the bottom of the boat helps to check the recoil. Among them are some good shots at a sitting flock, nor can they be excelled in the management of their own sort of craft. The two Hornigolds, Lynn gunners, are fine young men; and Goddard, the elder, is quite the admiral of the gunning fleet on that part of the coast.

THE KEYHAVEN OR HAWKERIAN CANOE.

Canoe I say, for I am not very partial to the appellative punt for a craft which is sharp at one end, and by no means square at the other, and which rows nearly as well either end foremost. Indeed, there is no reason why both ends should not be quite sharp. I presume the aboriginal shooting craft bore some resemblance to that square-ended "consarn" so often seen near favourite perch and barbel holes, and that hence this Dutch-built term has descended to the modern shooting-boat, whose lengthy, narrow, and low form is the very antipodes of Piscator's washing-tub, and whose light, rakish, and, when not too beamy, elegant appearance, certainly entitles it to a place among the canoe tribe.

Canoes or shooting-punts partially decked were, I believe, originally invented by the family of Buckel, who were very

superior gunners, upwards of half a century ago, at Malden, in Essex, whence the plan was more recently conveyed to Southampton by their descendant, Elijah Buckel, who is most cognoscent in everything relative to the construction and management of shooting-punts, stanchion-guns, and, in short, the whole *arcana* of wild fowl shooting. This old Southampton canoe, however, has been so very materially improved upon since by Colonel Hawker, to whom the amateur is indebted for having given publicity to it in its emended and most approved forms, that I have thought it proper to give his name to it. When I commenced gunner, after having viewed a variety of canoes, the one upon which I fixed, as the best model to copy from, was that on Colonel Hawker's plan, of the late Captain Ward, R.N., and which had just then been built by Mr. Blaker, of Southampton, under the superintendence of Buckel. Though Mr. Blaker is a first-rate yacht and ship-builder, yet being *then* a stranger to this sort of craft, he had too good sense to reject the counsel of such a man as Buckel. Considering the model in question deficient in beam for a gun so heavy as the one I proposed to have, I requested Mr. Blaker to build my canoe somewhat longer, and with two inches more beam, nor did I ever find reason to repent the alteration. Her dimensions are as follow:—

	Feet.	In.
Extreme length - -	23	4
Extreme breadth at bottom -	2	8
Length inside decks - -	14	1
Breadth between combings -	2	9

I afterwards, from time to time, found this canoe susceptible of improvements both externally and internally, in rowing as well as in sailing—so much so, that now, when coupled with my new mode of management, it is, in a measure,

quite another sort of thing; and, without the smallest hesitation, I recommend it to the adoption of the young gunner, considering it, as I do—taking all parts of the coast and all chances—the very best description of canoe, and of the best size that can be built for conveying two men and a large gun.

The improvements consist chiefly in having a copper loop-hole fixed on the gunwale, to pass the sheet through, which gives more expanse of sail than usual; in having but one pair of rowlocks, and those wooden ones, attached to, and on a level with, the top of the wash-streaks, instead of two pairs of metallic rowlocks fixed on deck, which are not only heavy in themselves, and occasion much more show, but which, when struck by the sea, cause the spray to be dashed into the boat; and in having but one pair of copper thowls in use at one time, and those movable at a moment.

She will carry nine yards of canvass, or, what is better (for calico rots so soon), of Knaresborough or Irish linen, in a good breeze, and the sail admits of being lowered and reefed in a stiff one. On two occasions, indeed, we carried our mast away with "carrying on," whilst she remained "as stiff as a crutch." A sail much larger than this, especially if made of canvass, is not handy to whip up and down; and I found nine yards quite sufficient to propel her through the water at a good rate, in a fair breeze. She contains room enough within; in short, "the maximum of utility in the minimum of space;" and in places where it is not convenient or expedient to keep her always afloat, is much more easily taken up on the beach, or launched on rollers, or on wheels, than one which is larger and heavier; she also shows less, especially in smooth water, than canoes of larger size, and will row with ease, speed, and pleasure, and can be sculled up to birds in places and at times when a larger canoe, with a heavy gun, would be both miser-

ably heavy to row, and positively could not be sculled up to birds by a person laid on his back.

As regards safety, she will go through a heavier swell than any two men have a right to be out in, and might, in many cases, be rowed out of danger before the sea was sufficiently up to do mischief; when a slow-pulling, bigger, and heavier canoe would be caught out, and placed in great peril, if she did not perish.

Very large canoes may, no doubt, answer well enough to drift down on birds with the tide, or where the tides are slack; but where there are channels and hot tides, they stand no chance whatever in being sculled across these, or rowed against them, with that medium-sized canoe I am now advocating and recommending. I should be extremely sorry to be compelled to risk it in one of these heavy-rowing punts. What *could* be done with them against both a high wind and a head sea? Μεγα βιβλον μεγα κακον; and so is it with shooting-canoes, which, for general use, ought not, in my opinion, to be larger than my own canoe in question, that has carried two men, by no means light weights, and a very heavy gun, over many hundred miles of "salt *say*," in nearly all weathers, has answered to the oar whenever she has been called upon, and though but a wooden* concern, I really have my respect for her, and believe she feels quite as much for me as some animated beings do. Indeed, some kinds of wood must be animated; or what can *lignum vitæ* mean?

I make no apology for having dwelt at some length on this subject, because of its prime importance on the one hand, and, on the other, because I know that very large canoes will, for general use, ever be productive of dissatisfaction to the owner, and of far too much labour to the skipper.

* Appendix, No. 8.

ON BUILDING DECKED-CANOES, AND THE BEST BUILDERS.

The best gunners usually build their own; and a canoe will never be turned out the worse for the supervisorship of an experienced gunner, let who may find hands to build it.

I can confidently recommend to the notice of my readers, two excellent builders of this sort of craft, and who are conversant with the niceties of the art. Mr. Blaker, of Southampton, an excellent yacht and ship-builder, has studied under Professor Buckel, and is really a superlative hand, as well as being a very civil man. He has built several first-rate Hawkerian canoes, and, among others, three for myself; and nothing could have given more satisfaction than they have done—nay, his fame has reached the sister kingdom, whither he is in the habit of sending these canoes.

Benjamin Ord, Esq., had a canoe built pretty much on the model of my largest one, by Cambridge of Hartlepool, and in which the latter displayed his usual tact, for nothing comes amiss to him; and in the building of a coble he stands unrivalled. Mr. Ord, I know, approves much of this canoe, which rows, sails, and sculls remarkably well; and she has been well tried, for her owner is indefatigable in the pursuit of wild fowl; never allows his guns to complain of the want of a bellyful, and goes through a sea in his Cantabrigian craft with as undaunted nerve as though he were in the *Great Western*. Mr. Burton, of Seaton Carew, near Hartlepool, though by trade a joiner, is practically conversant with both the management and building of canoes. He built a small one for me—a somewhat crank and imaginative bark, and, as

such, named *Φαντασιασ παισ*.* His brother, whose canoes he built, was, many years ago, a very successful gunner in the Tees Bay. In fact, at that time, he had the whole ground to himself; but, alas! in the end his gun proved fatal to him.

STANCHION-GUN FOR LARGE CANOES, AND WHAT DESCRIPTION OF GUN IS THE BEST.

Ne quid nimis.

Having in a preceding chapter described the canoe I recommend as preferable to all others for carrying two men and a large gun, I shall now proceed to describe the sort and size of gun, in my opinion, the best adapted for that canoe. But as stanchion, like shoulder-guns, are singles or doubles, I propose entering previously upon an impartial discussion of the respective merits of each. And, first, of

Large double Stanchion-guns.

The first of these that I ever heard of, was used by Kemp, a very good gunner, some twenty-five or thirty years ago, at Boston, and on the Humber; but the late John Moulton, the Buckel of Boston, told me, that he (Kemp) "preferred a single to the double;" that "he sometimes fired both barrels at once, but more commonly, pop, pop," as he expressed it, or one barrel after the other. Moulton himself did not appear to like double great guns, neither does Buckel, nor many other first-raters on the coast. Reed, however, no

* *Φαντασιασ παισ*— the daughter of phantasy. Is it not Bion who thus beautifully designates Hope:—Ελπισ *φαντασιασ παισ*?

ordinary authority, is an exception; for when I asked him what *he* thought of doubles compared with singles, he decidedly gave the preference to the former. "You should see Colonel Hawker," said he, with much energy, his large blue eyes, the while, 'in a fine phrensy rolling'—"you should see the Colonel among the geese, when he shoots first at the flock pitched, and then, again, when they are on the wing!—*How he brings them down!*" I think it would have done the Colonel himself good to have heard this eulogistic *strain* from *Reed.** For my own part I felt quite renovated by it; it showed his respect for his employer, and his rooted attachment to—his taste for the sport.

And now for an enumeration of the advantages, and the contrary, of large double stanchion-guns. I say large, because, whatever be the merit of a large double, a small or even a moderate-sized one can bear no comparison whatever with a single stanchion-gun of similar weight. A double stanchion is worth, comparatively, nothing without a large bore, and if it have that, the weight must be proportionate, and, therefore, very considerable.

Alleged Advantages of double over single Stanchion-guns, with Remarks showing those Advantages to be more nominal than real.

1st. You have two chances, and, therefore, the gun is almost certain to go off with one barrel; for, if one lock miss fire, the other trigger can soon be pulled, and, at a sitting shot, very often with as good effect as ever.

2nd. You may either fire both barrels at once; or may reserve the second barrel for a second shot at the same flock.

3rd. You have the choice of two chargers of shot which may differ in size, in quantity, in the mode in which they are

* Appendix, No. 9.

put into the gun, or in any one or all these particulars; and can use either charge at discretion.

4th. In case of a rival gunner pushing you when you have fired but one barrel, you need not stop to reload, and thereby allow him to give you the go-by, but up sail, and away to the next flock.

In regard to a misfire, that, with care, will scarcely ever occur in a single gun; and, if it do, it need not always balk you of a shot, for by priming afresh instantly, without showing your head, you may often obtain a second chance at birds sitting, and do as well as ever.

Firing both barrels at once is not a plan I admire; for if one barrel hang fire, or go off quicker than the other, if there be no unpleasant jar, one would imagine there must be some deviation in the true course of the shot, as we know to be the case with balls when thus discharged from a double rifle. Besides, in the event of a double discharge at a large flock, at a fair distance, the birds, or at all events those most towards the centre, will not only be killed with the double, but will be double killed. And if you use but one barrel on such occasion, you shoot to far greater advantage than with a single of similar or even of less weight and dimensions, and which allows of a so much larger bore. The opportunity of firing a second barrel at the same flock, is, for the most part, ideal, at least in open weather; for the smoke of the first barrel* hides the birds, which generally disperse the moment they are up, and fly straight away.

That the option of two different charges will, sometimes, be found a real advantage, both by day and night, is not to be denied, and if not, the only one is, in my humble opinion, the greatest of the whole.

* Two large single guns fixed in the same boat, but at different elevations, and fired one immediately after the other, have been used with effect in the Island of Islay and elsewhere.

Advantages of large single over large double Stanchion-guns.

1st. Much cheaper at first cost, and in after repairs.

2nd. Less trouble to clean by more than one half.

3rd. Admit the great advantage of a much larger bore.

4th. Safer in themselves, and, *cæteris paribus*, will both kill farther and more birds at a shot.*

5th. Much less cumbersome than a double of proper weight must be, and which can only be carried in a canoe of, as I have already shown, inconvenient and, on the whole, injurious magnitude.

6th. Less liable to accidents from casual discharges, and to mistakes being made when loading in a hurry.

7th. Easily removable by two men to any moderate distance, whereas the enormous weight of a very heavy double is punishingly ponderous to the shoulders of both.

8th. Easy for one person to throw overboard in case you come into danger,† whilst a very large double would, probably, require two persons, one of whom ought to be steering and sitting as far aft as possible.

These, I conceive, decide the superiority of single over double stanchion-guns for general use, and in open weather especially, when birds are far the best worth having.

It therefore now only remains to determine the size of a single gun best adapted for a two-handed canoe. As a

* The best of these large doubles have not always stood the proof.

† The instance of the Honourable Henry Hely Hutchinson, who, when duck-shooting, some two or three years ago only, in his punt in Ireland, was compelled, on one occasion, to throw overboard his 200 lb. double, and who had still a narrow escape of his life, is a case in point. And I know, from the very best authority, that he has since expressed his decided disapproval of very heavy stanchion-guns. And his opinion is entitled to no small weight, as he has not only studied the subject, but is an excellent manager of a canoe, and a very superior shot.

wide bore—*i. e.*, one not less than one inch and a half, is a great advantage in shooting, I am an advocate for a heavy barrel, and the safety of the canoe, and, therefore, your own, requires that it be a long one.

All heavy guns should be fitted up with Colonel Hawker's apparatus; and though considerable execution may be done with those of lighter weight, yet, for a large canoe, I should fix the minimum at eight and the maximum at twelve stone; the length of the barrel varying from seven feet ten inches to eight feet four inches. But as the weight of the stock for a heavy barrel will be from fourteen to twenty pounds, and as Colonel Hawker's apparatus will add a good deal more to that weight, your barrel must be ordered accordingly, if you be desirous that the whole gun shall not exceed a certain weight.

The advantage of a heavy gun is, that, when rather lightly loaded, she still carries a large and an effective charge, and, of course, with ease under even the percussion system. Besides, a heavy gun is better to aim with, especially in very windy weather; and, though the weight is inimical to fast rowing, it acts as ballast, and enables you to carry more sail, so that, on the whole, you get on faster than you could do by any other plan.

DIFFERENT PLANS FOR EASING THE RECOIL OF A STANCHION-GUN,

INCLUDING THE AUTHOR'S NEW METHOD.

"Cede repugnanti, cedendo victor abibis."

THE recoil of a large stanchion-gun, when fully loaded, is awfully tremendous, and even that of a little big gun is by no means a thing to be lightly regarded. I have already (pages 328, 329) dwelt on the imperious necessity of means being employed for the removal of that recoil, and I now proceed to point out the best.

When a rope-breeching is employed alone, it certainly restrains the gun, but can hardly be said to take off the recoil; true it is, the rope stretches, but has none of that kindly elastic yielding of a spiral spring, in consequence of which it shakes everything by its violent jerking, and almost makes your very teeth chatter in your head; but by means of Colonel Hawker's spring-swivel, combined with the rope, the recoil is so much eased as to make everything comfortable and safe to the shooter. In his book already quoted, the Colonel has given a full explanation of this contrivance, and has, moreover, furnished engravings of the whole concern, and of its several parts; and no sportsman desirous to turn gunner would, of course, be without that book; for to name all that is deserving of note in it were to transcribe almost the whole.

In regard to that part of this apparatus, called "the loop," this should be particularly well beat, but not case-hardened, as it would not then take the browning if required. This

loop, the Colonel recommends, "should be made of horse-nail stubs, and be forged on to the barrel." In this case, I presume, the plan would be, after having forged the loop, chipped out what was needed, and filed it in the rough, to "shut" it on the barrel nearly in a perfect state, and afterwards to finish it off. My plan is to have the loop forged separately and with a flanch, which is turned in a slide lathe, in a semicircular form, and is let into the barrel so as to have an even and uniform bearing upon it. It is then fastened with soft solder, and by six short, broad screws, each having six fine threads, but which do not pass through to the interior of the barrel by the one-eighth of an inch, and which, if they did, being so well fitted and of the best iron, when once cut smooth by the bit, would not injure the gun; but, as they now are, many fresh borings may take place before the ends of the screws are reached. Lastly, the whole is fastened down by a dovetail, and thus consolidated in one mass; the job is remarkably neat, and the loop becomes part and parcel of the barrel itself. There is, however, this advantage in a large double, that the loop may be forged on to the rib, and thus the barrels themselves remain untouched.

"The slider," must be case-hardened, because the harder it is, the better it slides, besides case-hardening, where admissible, always prevents bruises and rust.

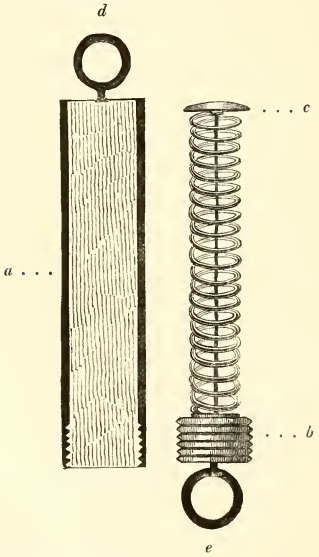
As to the spiral spring, I should say that ten inches were long enough, and one inch and a half in diameter wide enough; for by enlarging the latter you do harm by elevating the gun the more, and in lengthening the spring you will often have to shorten the deck in proportion, and even a single inch here is of great consequence—it might save you where the boat would not otherwise live. At the same time, I have no idea of any spiral springs of these dimensions resisting, *per se*, the recoil of my large gun, being confident that, if tried alone,

they would all either snap or give. But with the addition of the rope-breeching—extending all the way under the deck from a ring, where the eye-bolt is placed perpendicularly in the stem-piece, and then fastened on each side the gun-stock—to aid in easing the recoil, they act very well; but the rope alone, as I have said before, jars, and thus interrupts the point blank delivery of the charge; whilst the spiral spring, taking the whole of the recoil at first, and for the last inch or two only being aided by the rope, the twofold purpose of safety of the spring itself, on the one hand, and of correct delivery of the shot on the other, is at once answered. Moreover, the gun, when thus secured, is so perfectly safe, that the most timid lady might fire it with the utmost composure.

The rope for holding the gun should be, at the least, an inch thick; and made of the best white hemp, not "tort" twisted, but slack, without, what is called, a "gut" in it, because that is liable to break when the strands fall in; besides, a slack rope dries sooner and lasts longer than that which is tightly twisted. My process of fixing the rope was as follows:—having removed the little trap-hatch on the deck, near to the stem-piece, I first passed the rope through the ring and drew it tight, bringing the ends even; the two sides were then tightly bound together for three or four inches above the ring, with strong waxed twine to prevent the rope slipping; an eye was then formed at each end of the rope, to slip over the grooved heads of the bolt which attaches the stock to the barrel; and, as new rope stretches, the untwisted ends were left long until the recoil of the gun had expanded it to the utmost. I then saturated that part of the rope which came in contact with the ring, and for a foot above, with the best tar; the remainder was painted white. This rope, after having been fixed to the canoe for eight years, is now as good as ever.

Care should be taken to keep it as dry as you can; for when wet it runs up, and then there is considerable trouble and exertion required to get the eyes of the rope on the grooves.

My new Box Spiral, or imperial Jack-in-the-box Spring, for effectually easing the Recoil of large Guns of moderate Weight, and preventing the Jar of a common Rope-breeching.



a. The cylinder, or box of copper or iron.

b. The collar, or plug, which screws into cylinder.

c. The circular piece of iron, or stopper, which screws on to the end of the square rod, passing through the collar and spirals.

d. The ring to which one extremity of a rope is fixed which attaches to the stem-piece at the other.

e. The ring through which the rope is passed that attaches to the gun-stock.

As I never could recommend a gunner to use any other mode of ignition for any coast-gun, large or small, than Mr. Edge's "eccentric capped-tube primer," and as it is decidedly unsafe to shoot from the shoulder only with a large gun on the percussion system, there must be some provision for resisting recoil in even the smallest large guns; but as lightness —of great moment in any canoe—is almost a *sine quâ non* in a single-handed one, if we can safely dispense with Colonel Hawker's apparatus—so essential for a very large gun in a large canoe—the advantage is not trifling, because the weight of both wood and iron will thereby be materially diminished, and valuable room gained. To effect this, my present plan is submitted; but for a large gun in a single-handed canoe, I should invariably recommend (at all events to the young gunner) a moderate charge; such, in fact, as you could almost shoot from the shoulder without any artificial means of resisting recoil. Act as you may, you have only one hand and arm at liberty to manage the gun in firing, as you must steer the veering craft with the other; whereas, in a two-handed canoe, you have both your hands completely at your own disposal, and, therefore, have far more command over the gun.

FORMATION AND MANAGEMENT OF SPIRAL SPRINGS.

If there be the smallest speck of a flaw in the metal of a spiral spring, however well tempered, when it comes to be tried by the sudden shock from the recoil of a heavy detonating gun, is will, to a certainty, snap in that part. Again, if it be without flaw, and be either too weak or badly tempered, it will

give, or contract in length. In the former case you have no remedy, except to mend the spring with a new one; but, in the latter, you may, at a pinch, still carry on the war without interruption, by filling up the vacancy occasioned by the shortening of the spring with a round of copper, or hard-beat sole leather, which will not only cause the spring to act, but will prevent that jingling noise it is apt to make when loose. A small spiral—say one not exceeding an inch and a half in diameter—is the best when formed out of round steel-rod; a large one should be wrought square. Every conntry blacksmith will tell you that he can temper these springs to perfection; but the fact is, they require the hand of a very nice and skilful artificer. Each spring, when finished, ought to be cramped in a vice; for, if it will not stand that, most assuredly it will never stand the sudden contraction occasioned by the gun's recoil. The spirals should be as wide apart as they are thick; for if one space be wider than another, the spring will snap, as all the stress rests on the unequal opening; hence, whilst being made, they should be set by a gauge from time to time. To be perfect, the spring, if used alone, ought to be strong enough to resist the action of the gun before it closes; because, when driven home, it is in danger of breaking from the jar and extra pressure; but as a spring, of diameter sufficiently large to effect this, would be otherwise unsuitable in a canoe, a slight spring is the best, because it eases the first of the reaction of the gun—afterwards checked by the rope—which, if the spring were stubborn, would be all on the stanchion.

It may finally be observed that the bolt, or swivel, should not touch the sides, but go easily into the hole, or stanchion.

STANCHION-GUN FOR SINGLE-HANDED CANOE, AND WHAT DESCRIPTION OF CANOE IS THE BEST.

Any man, who is a pretty good shot and oarsman—and if he can manage a sail, so much the better—may, with the aid of a knowing skipper to scull and steer, and a little practice, enjoy very fair sport in big gun shooting, in a large canoe, on the coast, with moderate labour and no great risk. But when he comes to be all alone in a *small* canoe, the affair assumes a more serious aspect, he being then thrown entirely on his own resources; and paddling, as he will find, is not only extremely cold work for the fingers' ends, but is about the hardest labour to which a man can put himself—at all events, in the whole circle of wild fowl shooting. On this account it is that sixteen amateurs in twenty would, I conceive, prefer making one in a two-handed canoe to going alone in a small one. Again, in the former instance, a man has both his hands—in the latter, but one hand at liberty, to manage his gun. On all these accounts I should recommend any amateur, desirous to figure alone, to commence with a *light* canoe, and a stanchion-gun of the smallest class (say not exceeding two or three stone); and, if ever, not to increase the weight of the gun until his wrists have become accustomed to the proper working of the paddles.

The great advantage of a small canoe and a light gun, is that, either by night or by day, you can go up to birds in shallow water, where they nearly always sit the best, and often the thickest together. You may also get shots on various occasions, in creeks and otherwise, where, in a large double-manned canoe, you could only be a spectator at a distance. In

fact, in some places, nearly always, and at all places, at times, these small canoes will beat the large ones; and, for my own part, I like them much, as they are so very useful in their way, particularly among the *tringæ* by day, and the *anas* tribe by night. They are, also, often extremely useful to shove off* at a moment's warning, either to jockey a rival gunner, or when, before you could get the "big un" afloat, the birds would either be gone, or left high and dry on a sand-bank, by a quick receding tide. In short, no regular coast-shooting establishment is complete without one of these delightful little craft.

Although the bottom of a narrow punt, or canoe, may be made in one piece, yet the plan is to be condemned. The bottom is best in three widths, as an inch and a half or two inches must be allowed for "kammeling;" a broad board put out of its form will not stand being alternately wet and dry; it is apt to split in the centre, particularly where, as must be the case here, the edges are confined. Besides, in short lengths, you can pick your wood.

For a small canoe some prefer single thowls with a small bit of leather tacked on the side of the oar, as you are then enabled to let go your oars without unshipping them.

In regard, also, to the sculling crotch, though I prefer it *round* for a large canoe, one open at the top is the best for a small one; otherwise, you are obliged to put your oar over the side to ship it, which is apt to frighten the birds.

The single-handed canoe, which I would recommend to the gunner, is such a one as Mr. Blaker built, for a friend of mine, according to dimensions I sent him in 1840, and re-

* By carrying a pair of nicely-constructed light, broad rollers, which take to pieces, you may push my lady and your gun over hard sand, or mud, from creek to creek, and thus often jockey a sudden gale, or a rival, and now and then get the best of shots.

specting which he wrote as follows: "Buckle has been to see her, and thinks her a beauty, both in model, lightness, and strength; her bottom is fir, bare three-eighths of an inch thick, her sides wainscot oak, a full quarter of an inch thick; timbers oak, very light. I was obliged to put the sides oak on account of the great curve which cuts the fir too much across the grain."

I prefer a rope-breeching, with my box-spiral, to any other plan for a single-handed canoe.

CAUTIONS TO BE OBSERVED IN THE POSITION AND USE OF LARGE GUNS IN A CANOE.

1st. Long barrels are absolutely necessary, whether they shoot the best or not; because every canoe ought to have, at the least, six and a half feet of deck forwards; and if the muzzle of the gun do not extend sufficiently near to the nose of the canoe, the latter might be shot off by an accidental discharge, when she would fill in spite of every effort of yours: and "foundered at sea, all hands lost," is at any time a melancholy tale to tell, though soon related;—alas! would we had no recent "President" of such sad fatality. But if your gun be too short, the best remedy is a piece of wood grooved at the top to receive the barrel, and in the shape of a long, low arch, fixed well forwards, on the front deck; thus the gun will be sufficiently elevated, whilst the water will pass under the arch.

2nd. When going up to birds with the gun cocked, in

case they rise out of shot, let down the trigger to half-cock instantly.

3rd. Whenever about to land with the gun loaded, first take out the tube, or primer, and pop it into your waistcoat pocket; and then let the cock down.

4th. Whenever you fire close in shore, and at night especially, be sure that the coast is clear, and be particularly cautious by day, how and where you fire mould-shot, or bullets, as they fly so very far. A celebrated and ingenious gunner once shot some horses from Pool harbour; and it is an established maxim among brethren of the big—"*quando aimas ad Jack Heronem, non licet hittere Jack Assum*"—when you aim at a Jack Heron it is not lawful to hit a Jackass.

FIRING A LARGE GUN FROM A CANOE.

THE mere act of firing one of these guns, however large, when properly loaded and secured, in a large canoe, which carries two hands, is a very simple business, provided you have previously imbibed a few equally simple instructions, and are careful to attend to them on all occasions: such as—never to keep your cheek close to the stock; nor to allow the but to come in contact with your shoulder-bone; nor to place any of your fingers, or the thumb, behind the trigger; otherwise you may receive, at the least, a severe jar, if not a worse injury. As to the report, it seems a mere nothing to the shooter; but if he keep his cheek close to the stock, he will experience from the report of the primer a sort of stunning vibration in his

ear, better felt than described; and yet, credit me, better described than felt. I never, in all my life, was electrified, except at the conduct of certain individuals, who, up to a particular period, were universally considered paragons of honour and honesty; but if there be any electricity in lending too close an ear to our primer's report—that is *positive*—I am positive of *that*. At the same time, much of this will be obviated by Mr. Edge's new primer, which contains so very much less detonating powder than Joe Manton's, and to which, indeed, it is vastly superior.

On first lying down in the canoe, your man on his back, and you on your stomach, preparatory to going up to birds, you look behind you as you lie, and place the ball of your right foot close to his left, so that he can give you a hint, without speaking, whenever he deems it advisable for you to look up, which you must do by raising your head slowly, very gradually, and by no means on a sudden, unless he call out—"They're up!"

On ordinary occasions, previous to raising yourself to the firing position, and whilst your phrenology-box is so well kept down that you all but touch the bottom boards with your forehead, place your left hand as far under your left breast as you can get it, with the elbow forward; then put your right hand close to your right side, and flat upon the boards; and, thus supported on each side, hitch yourself gently and steadily forwards—thus preventing any rocking motion of the canoe—into the proper place for rising,* which you will ascertain by means of a line drawn or painted on the bottom boards, or by some other previously well-defined and fixed mark. In rising preparatory to firing, you place the upper part of the but *below* the shoulder-bone, or, as it were, rather under the arm;

* That is, neither too backward nor the contrary, but just so far that, on your rising, the shoulder meets the but at once.

and thus, partly by muscular pressure against the but, and partly by means of the left hand placed under the stock, you gradually elevate the muzzle and regulate the aim. And when once you are fairly within shot of the birds, and only "mind your hits," you cannot miss; for then, with muzzle raised to shoulder height, the thumb of your right hand placed on the middle joint of your fore finger, and all the fingers before the trigger—whether the fowl sit or spring, you have a right to make a good shot. Never flinch from your gun in firing; but lean hard against the but, and grasp it firmly below with the left hand; and be careful not to let your knees come in contact with the timbers of the boat.

Grand errors are wont to be committed in all sports; and not a few who profess to follow them are ever able to conquer these. Thus, in the hunting-field, some men never can cut any figure, simply because, as Nimrod says, "they will not gallop." So it is with our other "NOBLE SCIENCE"—they will not fire! They appear to think that a huge, heavy-looking gun (not a clumsy one) must require winding-up before she will *go*. How often have I seen fine shots thus too civilly *waited* upon by brethren of the *big*, who, by this dilatory mode of proceeding, have not done one-half the execution which might and ought to have been achieved. They do not reflect how much more usual it is for birds, just as you approach within killing distance, to swim *from* each other than *together*; nor how very soon they become dispersed when once they are up. Many fancy that the firing of these guns must be a formal and deliberate, if not a dead slow act at all times. Quite the contrary—a more egregious error cannot be; for the gunner *must* sometimes pull quick as thought if he mean to make the best of his chance, or, indeed, to touch a feather. He must *shoot*, and not gape and stare only; nay, sometimes he will find it expedient to fling his right arm over

the stock and *strike* (not pull) the trigger instantaneously, or, as it were, with unconscious intuitiveness, as ladies "strike the light guitar." By thus "catching the fleeting moment of success," he may, perhaps, stop the career of many knot, when "going many knots an hour." Music is not the only art in which brilliancy of execution is to be displayed.

A man who, in going up to birds, has nothing else to do but to attend to his gun, has, in this respect, great advantage over a gunner in a small canoe; for the latter having, as I observed before, to manage the canoe with one arm whilst he presses down the stock, and regulates the aim by the shoulder alone of the other, cannot, however skilful he may be, pretend to vie in quickness with him who has himself and both his hands entirely at liberty. Habit, however, will do a great deal; and though Buckel has no visible means of resisting the recoil of his large gun, and is alone in his canoe, his great quickness in firing shows the hand of a master.

As regards the allowance to be made, and the elevation to be given, in cross shots flying, these must depend entirely upon the distance at which the birds are from the shooter, and the rapidity of their flight, the former ever uncertain, and the latter extremely variable, not only with different sorts of birds but with the same sort at different times, according to the weather, the wind especially, and other circumstances. Practice can alone teach this very requisite and pleasing, yet most difficult branch of the art.

At birds sitting on the water, never aim low, as many of the common gunners do even at 100 yards distance, "always seeing a bit of water between the muzzle and the birds," their mode of explaining this stupid system, whereby the bulk of the shot strikes into the water before it reaches the birds. Thus the central and strongest driven pellets are buried, leaving only the descending and half-spent shots to

drop, as it were, upon the birds; hence so many cripples and so few dead birds. Shoot over the water, elevating according to distance and the springing of the birds, if they indicate a disposition to spring, but never into it, unless at a seal, who may happen to pop up his round head pretty close to you, when you had best take his neck low, between wind and water, as the cartridge will rise a good deal at that short distance. On choice, the critical moment for the charge reaching a flock of birds, would be at the first spring, when their wings are hitting each other, for they will give one another room as soon as they can.

In cross shots always fire before the birds cross you; and when a flock are but from seventy to ninety yards off, and are not flying fast, don't let the apparent distance tempt you to shoot too forward; shoot but very little before the heads of the leading birds, which will be caught, provided you pull quickly, by the outer shots of the circle, whilst the central ones will prove a great bore to the more central birds of the flock. The foremost half of a flock is generally the thickest, it is not often that birds double up much behind. As to elevation, if you shoot either too high or too low, you will only make segmental destruction; but, if your calculation be correct, the shot will bore a hole through the centre of the flock, which, for a moment, before the rear rank has taken close order, shows as much daylight as though a hogshead had been shot through it.

BIRDS RISING.

Wigeon, when rising, do so pretty gradually, and often in succession, through a whole line of flock; but ducks generally jump quickly and simultaneously; and teal rise more suddenly, and, therefore, more together than any other birds. But with the latter, there is seldom any medium, they being

either very wild or the contrary; for when in the humour for sitting, either on sand or water, you may approach nearer to them than to any other of the *ana* tribe. Besides, the worst of wigeon and wild ducks is, they are so apt to swim apart from each other as you approach within shot; whilst teal either keep together, or away they go at once. This is the reason that I frequently bagged in the Tees Bay, ten, fifteen, and twenty of those birds at a shot on the deep water, when, out of a similar number of ducks or wigeon, though so much bigger birds, I should have deemed it very good shooting to have bagged half that number.

BIRDS ON AND OUT OF THE WATER.

When out of the water, you have the whole bird, large as life, to shoot at; but when on the water, however smooth, one half of it is buried underneath the surface, and the repulsive effect of water on shot is well known. Besides, birds nearly always stand much thicker together and in better form than they swim, so in springing from the land they rise both thicker and slower than from their natural element; the elasticity of which appears to act like a spring-board to them. When, therefore, you can reasonably calculate on having the shot to yourself, you will frequently find your account in not molesting the flock whilst swimming, but by waiting at a distance until they have swam to the side, and either waddled out to please themselves (and you), or until the receding tide has left them dry: besides, by thus waiting, other birds are often induced to join a flock. When you see birds thus circumstanced, always give them a little time to settle before you attempt to go up to them, unless you be at a considerable distance from them, and the tide be ebbing so quickly that there may be a danger of your not being able to approach sufficiently near to them for want of water. But when

favourably situated, as at the side of a deep channel, then, you can, in a measure, take your own time. The spy-glass will at once enable you to read their disposition. If they keep getting up by two and three at a time, and then wheel round, and pitch again; or if they have their heads up, staring about them, "they won't do yet," if at all. But if they draw together on the sand, the moment they are out of the water, the mallards standing pluming their feathers with their bills, or placing the latter under their wings, and the old ducks sitting down, with their bills on their breasts, looking "as old fashioned as can be," then the sooner you are on your passage to them the better, and it is your fault if a good many of them be not soon rivetted to the spot.

Again, if when on the water—for they are not always in the humour for going out on the mud, or sand, especially in fine weather—they swim slowly, with their bills on their breasts, or occasionally tread water and flap their wings, or, it may be, chase each other,* plash the water about, and quack like tame ducks at play in a pond, they are then "all right." But if they swim deep and against the stream, as fast, perhaps, as you can scull, it is an ill omen.

The moment the mallards begin to lengthen their necks, particularly if on the water, "up guards, and at 'em!" Pull! For, before you can utter—"Oh! stay!" "Fly not yet!" or any such little monosyllables of endearing invite, nine times in ten they are off. If within a fair distance, don't elevate your gun too much to allow for their springing, for if you pull quickly you will kill some of them on the water, and the top shots will catch the old mallards if they be six feet high

* "The graceful play of water birds is always particularly delightful to me; those bright creatures convey to my fancy a fuller impression of the joy of freedom than any other in nature; perhaps, because they seem the lords of two elements."—Hemans.

above it. I have often noticed this, and it is one of the prettiest features in all gunning to see them die in the air, and come down on their backs with such a plash! That's the way "to turn 'em with their faces upwards," as Shakspeare hath it. Those old mallards are crafty fellows forsooth, but if ever the gunner come within 100 yards of them, there ought to be some display on the water after the white column of smoke has rolled along the surface sufficiently far to enable him to see the result of the shot.

Among the numerous errors respecting big gun shooting, none is more common than that the larger the flock the more birds you will kill. In very severe weather this may sometimes be, and, indeed, usually is the case, for then the birds are starved out of all vigilance, and into a state of comparative torpor; but in open weather it is very rarely so. In a large flock there are always many sentinels, patriarchal mallards, and barren old ducks. Besides, in going up to a very numerous party, there is, generally, some "bunch" or other of intercepting stragglers in front, so that you must either be content with these few at a fair distance, or must fire at the many at a long one; and the former plan will always be adopted by a good gunner.

To kill birds, and a good many too, is by no means necessarily any criterion of a finished gunner. An indifferent shot, with but an indifferent aim, will, now and then, kill a good many birds out of a flock, when sitting. Neither does it follow that because a man shall, for once in his life, kill an extraordinary number at a shot, that he is an accomplished marksman with a large gun. For it is not necessarily the number bagged, nor yet the number (whether more less) shot at, which determines the skill of the gunner; but it is this, and this alone, which stamps his merit. Does he, or does he not, generally do justice to his shots? In

other words, does he kill as many as he ought according to the chances which occur? The position of the birds, and the distance at which they are from the shooter, are matters, at all times, to be taken into especial consideration, and not their mere number only.

I have killed twenty-three wigeon at a shot out of a flock, without having been satisfied; I do not mean with the number killed, but with myself, and the number which were not killed. On the contrary, I have often shot at both large and small flocks of wild fowl, and have killed but very few, and have yet been perfectly satisfied, because I felt confident I had killed as many as, all circumstances considered, it was possible for me to have killed.

As it may sometimes be found expedient to fire the gun while you are lying down in the canoe, by aiming at the left side of it instead of down the barrel in the usual way, you must aim to the right in proportion to the distance, there being half the barrel's difference betwixt looking along the side and looking along the top.

Now and then, if the flock be compact, and not too large, you may witness that most pleasing of all prospects to the gunner's eye—the death of all he shoots at; or, it may be, all save one to tell the tale of woe to his distant friends; and this appears to be the place for a little narrative respecting

DUNLIN-SHOOTING OFF LONG-SCAR ROCKS.

Between that new and rapidly rising sea-port, Hartlepool, and Seaton-Carew, in the county of Durham, there lies a dangerous reef of rocks, called Long-scar, at low water always more or less bare, and at spring-tides entirely so. Toward the latter end of August, or the beginning of September, the dunlin* make their appearance pretty numerously at the mouth

* Appendix, No. 10.

of the Tees, where they usually feed upon the sands and oozes around the bay; but, at this early period, are fond of frequenting the rocks in question. The shooting season now commences, and the first object of the Seaton folk, as well as that of the gentlemen sportsmen, who may be staying at that delightful little watering-place, is to obtain the "Seatonian prize" of a few couples of dunlin. No sooner, therefore, has the receding tide bared Long-scar, than thither all parties repair; some by land, others by water. Some, stooping down, conceal themselves in the crevices of the dark rock; others, in boats, lie off the points most out at sea, in order to make a good flying shot as the birds take their rounds. In short, the whole rock is well-fortified, and, for the first day or two, very good sport is frequently obtained, although the birds, like all others worth having, are not so numerous now as formerly. The Yankees have what they call their "ducking;" *i. e.*, when they form a party to go shoot ducks on Duck Island, in Chesapeake Bay;* and thus the Seatonians, from time immemorial, have had their "dunlining;" and "in days lang syne" a golden harvest was sometimes reaped by one or two good shots, who, having the sport all to themselves, kept loading and firing away, never losing time in either picking up the dead, or in running after the wounded birds on the slippery rock, but trusting to the in-coming tide to float all ashore. Many scores have thus been obtained in a morning.

Well; on one of these "dunlining" days—'twas the 4th of September, 1834—a vast number of these birds made their appearance on Long-scar, when there soon appeared, also—as is usual now-a-days—shooters in proportion to the birds. Residing, as I at that time did, in the midst of a rabbit-warren, not 400 yards from the scene of action, I launched my canoe and big gun; but, unfortunately, by the time I

* See Appendix, No. 11.

could get afloat, the birds had all been bombarded away, save one small flock of eleven, strongly resembling a wisp of snipes, which kept flying round the rocks, despite the constant popping of the party. At length it came to my turn, being the opening shot of the season. Bang! went the gun, and down came ten of the eleven, all of which were bagged in pretty quick time; as for the sole survivor, who seemed hard hit, he disappeared in a sort of supernatural way; though whether he dropped dead from fear, or, like "Hecuba of Troy, ran mad through sorrow," has never yet, I believe, been correctly ascertained. Thus much is certain, this shot put an end to the shooting, because it put an end to the birds; though I understood some rather unpleasant, yet perfectly natural, reflections were cast upon "those big guns," as "spoiling all the sport." And certainly it *was* rather mortifying to all the shooters, save one, who had thus, at a moment's warning, dissolved the meeting, and *done* for the dunlining!

I fear my readers may deem me insufferably egotistical, but I can assure them that, throughout this little work, my trumpet is merely a flourish of illustration. Thus much, however, I will not deny; I am not altogether devoid of the poet's ambition; for—

——— "I twine
My hopes of being remembered in my line,
With my land's language."—Byron.

CANOE SAIL AND OARS.

As I have before remarked, Knaresborough, or Irish linen, and that not coarse, is preferable to any canvass for a canoe sail. For, besides occupying less room under deck, linen sails are not only far lighter to whip up and take down at a mo-

ment's warning—both very often of the greatest consequence in gunning—but they will draw and fill with the gentlest zephyrs, when heavier ones would not move at all. The large canoe I recommend, carries nine yards in her sail, which, in a brisk breeze, propels her through the water at a quick rate, and is as big as you can conveniently manage. There are times when she would carry two such sails with advantage, but they would occasion too much trouble unless she were kept exclusively as a pleasure-boat in fresh water, and, for my own part, I should prefer one of these canoes, for such purpose, to any other kind of craft; no boat being like it for traversing a river, or piece of water—for trolling or for throwing a fly; besides, two men, working her according to my plan, would go as fast as many four-oared boats, and if blowing hard and pulling to windward would beat them, a canoe being so much lower, the wind takes less effect upon it than on a larger craft.

These canoes, having no keel, will not keep very close to the wind; but, if used exclusively as pleasure-boats, might have two small "drafts" put on the bottom, similar, in form, to those on cobles, which, no doubt, would cause them to hold a better wind without drawing above two or three inches more water. Thus fitted up, they would answer all purposes on a lake, or river, or, indeed, wherever the water was eight or nine inches deep.

Always keep your sails as clean and dry as you can, and, when the weather permits, unfurl them in a sheltered situation, and fasten the sheet so that the sail may fill and dry in the wind, and not be torn by flapping about.

HOISTING SAIL.

In a strong wind, and with "lipper on," there is but one way of doing this to perfection, which is to stand close to the mast, and, having inserted the small end of the sprit into the

clew, raise it quickly and nearly perpendicularly, and not slanting forwards; because then the clew will be blown off the end of the sprit, when you will probably lose a good deal of time in catching hold of it again. Next, fix the other end of the sprit into the snotter on the grummett, and slip the latter up or down the mast, as may be required, until you see that the sail "stands well;" for if it be not set properly, the canoe will not go through the water nearly so fast as she otherwise would do.

MANAGING SAIL.

As this duty generally devolves upon you alone, whilst the man sits to steer, you must always be wide awake in easing the sheet in time, and especially in squally weather, when both hands must not only sit as far aft as possible, but to windward also; and when she will not carry the whole sail, you must lower it down, and take in a reef or two; or, if inexpedient to wait for that, you may, sometimes, merely slip the sprit out, and let her run on without it.

These linen sails, in particular, ought to have reef-bands, which consist of a piece of stouter linen sewed across the sail to strengthen it in the places where the eyelet holes of the reefs are made.

When the wind is moderate, and blowing steadily, considerable advantage, in point of speed, may be gained by your man holding the sheet* under or round his foot, or thigh—but by no means belaying it round the thowl-pin—thus leaving him the full use of both his hands in sculling whilst you are rowing. By this means you get up as much steam as can be raised, and away you glide—*velis et remis omnibus nervis!*

Although a sail is of the greatest possible advantage and alleviation to the gunners, who, in the course of the day, have

* The sheet is the *rope* attached to the sail, and not the sail itself.

always sufficient exercise in plying the oar, yet when birds on the water are wild, you must not keep it up too long, but take it down gradually, cautiously, and silently as possible, as, at such times, nothing so soon alarms and springs birds as the flapping of the sail, and the unshipping of the mast; sometimes, as in channels, where they are accustomed to passing boats, birds are the most readily approached under sail, particularly if both hands lie down as usual in the canoe. But, generally speaking, there is no plan like downing the sail and yourselves, when at a good distance from them, for ensuring an unsuspected approach and a good shot at a settled flock.

GOING BEFORE THE WIND.

Although a canoe, perhaps, never sails faster than when going before the wind, and taking the tide with her, still it is not always prudent to carry as much sail then as when she is going upon a wind; because, in the latter instance, she rises to a swell, whereas, in the former, she the rather ploughs the water than flies over it. I recollect once, when going before a stiff breeze, with a very strong ebb tide against us, a strong lipper on, and all sail out, the canoe seemed to go quite dead heavy through the water, buried herself forwards nearly over the stem-piece, and sometimes appeared as if she were about to run right under; the fact was, the wind pressing directly on the sail kept her down forwards, and the lipper being short, she was frequently on three waves at once; whereas, had there been but a slant of wind, she would have got her nose up, and have shewn some life. Beware, therefore, of carrying too much sail on such occasions, lest you should visit "the dark, unfathomed caves of ocean" before you are aware of it, and without your possessing the slightest curiosity for exploring those hidden regions.

CANOE OARS.

The most approved sculls now made in London, differ very materially from those of the last half century, when ash was the favourite wood, and all oars were made springy or elastic, but now, I believe, white pine is all the go, and all sculls for fast rowing are made stiff. Notwithstanding this, I prefer an oar with a little elasticity about it, agreeing as I do, however wrong the principle with the Hartlepool fishermen, that "a stiff oar tires a man far sooner than one having spring;" and I think this remark especially applicable to a canoe oar. The best wood for an oar of this sort, is the best seasoned English ash, straight grained, and free from knots. The long, or pull oar, is nine feet six inches long, and four and a half in the widest part of the loom; the short, or scull oar, which should never be made of any other wood than the toughest ash (that from a straight grown young tree is the best), should be as long as can be managed with ease, though, much shorter than the former.

Every part of each oar is, of course, made of a substance proportioned to its length; and each ought to have three coats of the best white paint, and about an inch from the end of the loom a narrow band of thin sheet copper should be fastened round it, with copper tacks, as the oars are frequently used in shoving the canoe off banks of sand, or gravel. The handle should be round and smooth, but not very thin.

After having used a new oar for a single day, not more, the pressure against the thowl, or the sculling crotch, will leave a mark showing the bearing point. Then, before the oar is further worn, let a cobbler sew tightly round it a piece of strong leather, about six or eight inches long, so as for the middle of it to fall over this mark. Next let him shave the leather thin round the top and bottom, and then nail it round

the edges with copper tacks, to keep the leather close to the wood, and the wet out; when all you have to do is to anoint the leather, at times, with a little neats-foot oil, and to have the covering timely renewed, as occasion may require.

ON THE ARRANGEMENT OF THE TRAPS IN A CANOE.

"I have great delight in what may be termed the domestic economy of a gunning boat. The ammunition of the great gun, the boat tackle, the sandwich-case and bottles, dead game and cigar-case, all neatly arranged, and snugly deposited, have an air of comfort about them which is difficult to define, but easily felt at the time."—SPORTING MAG.

So writes one who voyages along the rivers in his "gunning boat," a very picturesque and agreeable occupation, and then favours us with an equally entertaining account of his aquatic excursions.

I perfectly agree with him, in all he says, so long as there be "no smoking allowed aboard," on account of your proximity to gunpowder! But if this sort of orderly arrangement produce, as it certainly does, ineffable comfort and delight in a canoe inland, how much more essential is it on the coast, where attention to the proper stowage of the traps, and to the due trimming of the boat, is of so much greater consequence. "A place for everything and everything *in* its place," is a maxim which the gunner, of all other men, should carry, not merely in his head, but into practical effect.

The internal arrangements of a canoe should be made so as to admit of all loose articles being stowed away, not only

with the utmost convenience and despatch, but with the least noise. With this view I will mention an improvement of my own. In all the canoes I have ever yet seen or heard of, the timbers and planks are left bare under the front deck; but I have fitted in a floor of thin boards over them; in fact, a detached continuation or elongation of the bottom boards, so that the mast, oars, &c., are not only pushed under and drawn out with far greater facility and quickness, but with much less noise; indeed, with care, you need not make the slightest sound. Of course, this floor is best fitted in before the canoe is decked over.

In stowing away gun-rods, or other articles, under the front deck, be careful to push them far enough forwards, so as to prevent their interfering in any way with your elbows or the gun's stock, and, therefore, with the range of the gun in aiming to the right or left. The best way is to have a line painted with red lead, or cut out of the bottom boards, to shew how far you ought to push them. This prevents all further trouble, and, at the same time, directs you to avoid the opposite extreme of thrusting them too far forwards, whereby they are apt to become wedged, and then can only be released with difficulty, which also occasions noise; and we all know the effect of sound on the water.

All arrangements of this kind ought to be duly made and tried at periods of leisure, the wise man preparing in 'peace what is suitable for war.

Always put oars and gun-rods on the starboard—and sail, sprit, and cripple-net, on the larboard side the gun, being ever careful to put the sprit under deck, first, to prevent it piercing the sail.

For further particulars, see "Preparatory Arrangements for Risking it."

ON THE BEST MODE OF KEEPING A CANOE ON LAND WHEN IN CONSTANT USE.

On landing, after having rolled your canoe up safely out of reach of tide, always mop her quite clean, and having, by some means, raised the stem, and inclined her to one side, leave her so for a few minutes, when all the water, provided the limpet-holes be kept clear, will have drained down aft, which being removed with a dish, then mop her quite dry, and, if the weather permit, she may remain for some time exposed to the wind and air.

The board covers are now put on and locked up until you want to launch the canoe again. These covers not only prevent pilferage of oars, &c. but effectually exclude rain, snow, or drifting sand, thus keeping the rope-breeching dry, and the canoe in a comfortable state for your next reception. And certainly nothing can be more slovenly and unplesant than a damp or a dirty canoe.

Many—nay, nearly all gunners, contend that a canoe is the better for having a little water in her at all times; they say, and say truly, that it swells her, and tends to prevent leakage; but if the materials and workmanship be good, and my plan of coppering her seams be adopted, she will never leak except from abuse or accident. Besides it must not be forgotten that the more a canoe is kept out of the water, and the water out of her, the lighter she will be.

On fine days take off the covers, and take out the bottom boards, and give the whole an airing, as well as all the traps and your gunning apparel.

ON THE BEST MEANS OF PRESERVING A CANOE WHEN NOT IN USE.

A BOAT, when not in use, ought to be kept out of the water, the sun, and the wind; and the best place to keep it in is a boat-house, situated in a dry spot, enclosed on all sides with bricks, or boards, and covered at the top. Air should not be excluded from a boat-house, but a thorough draught of it should be prevented. A shed, with merely a covering at the top, is very often used for this purpose, but is, nevertheless, injurious, as the draught causes the boats to leak.

Boats are better kept on the keel than topsyturvy, as in hot weather the pitch is liable to run out of the seams. And as a canoe is so long, and has but one bearing point on level ground, to prevent straining, and to preserve her best, she ought to rest on a wooden frame made for the occasion, with five or six equidistant bearing points fitting the bottom of the canoe as true as a gunstock fits the barrel. Indeed, suspending her thus from broad straps of leather, or sacking, would, perhaps, be preferable to letting her rest on the ground.

Nothing rots a boat so soon as keeping her constantly afloat in still water.

A canoe, especially one with much elm about her, is all the lighter for being kept out of the water. I always remove the trap-hatch in summer, in order that the canoe may become thoroughly dry; I then fresh tar the rope near the ring and take out any substance which may accidentally have got thrust forwards and wedged in at the nose of the canoe.

BEST MODES OF LAUNCHING A CANOE.

A LIGHT single-handed canoe is easily carried anywhere by two persons, and readily launched by one; but in launching a two-handed canoe, or in getting her up on a beach, more force will often be required.

Nothing tends to strain a canoe more than forcibly dragging her about, especially on a stony beach. Four or five small rollers, a pair of coble-wheels, with an ash bow, or a four-wheeled truck, have all been used in their turns to save the bottoms of canoes in launching, and any of the three will answer the purpose, but not equally well. Your rollers should have large iron staples at both ends, and a chain and lock to secure them at one end, which prevents any one testing their excellence without your special permission.

When at the Tees-mouth, I had a pair of light, broad, spoke-wheels made on purpose, with an ash hoop attached, precisely similar to the best sort used for launching cobles, only much lighter. This plan is far quicker and better than rollers, and admits of a horse being used where the ground is sufficiently firm; and for such a beach as that at Seaton—long, steep, and stony as it is—this plan is very good, for the water becoming pretty suddenly deep at the edge, and these spoke-wheels being higher than the solid ones, when they are backed into the water the canoe ships none, and yet is easily floated off or on to the curved axle-tree, and the hoop which serves as a second bearing point.

Colonel Hawker describes, recommends, and gives a cut of a four-wheeled truck for launching a canoe, which is certainly the best of all for saving the bottom of one, and for preventing straining. But whether a pair of coble-wheels or a

four-wheeled truck be used, in some situations a long rope attached, at one end, to a wheel and pinion ashore, and, at the other, to the vehicle, would be the best means of hauling up the canoe.

One disadvantage of very large canoes for general use, is, that they are heavy to launch; for, build them light as you may, they cannot be made safe and durable without being some substance, and nearly all canoes are heavier than they appear.

For launching a canoe over soft mud, or sand, the best plan is the use of smooth rollers.

ON THE DIFFERENT MODES OF RENDERING A CANOE A LIFE-BOAT.

When Greathead, of Shields, the inventor of the life-boat, was questioned as to whence he deduced his first idea of its construction, he replied—"from seeing a milk-dish floating in a pail;" turn the dish whichever way you will you cannot upset it; and any person who has seen a life-boat resting on a level beach will have observed that, like a dish, it has but one point of contact with the ground, and that in the *centre only*. Such, also, is the case, in a great measure, with a well-shaped canoe, which has but one point of contact with the ground, though that, of course, is farther aft than the centre of it. The canoe is sprung fore and aft, is "kammelled" or rounded at the bottom, and flammed, or sloped outwards, at the sides, which are thus equivalent to so much additional bearings, or bottom, without actually adding a hair's breadth

to the width of the latter; and hence, though the craft may fill soon, it is none so easily capsized. In short, the Keyhaven canoe makes as near approach in form to that of the life-boat as circumstances will allow; and, for its size, will probably go through more sea than any craft which floats on salt water; indeed, it is surprising to see what it will stand with skilful management, provided you keep aloof from broken water, or heavy lop. But, from being so low, and rising indifferently to a swell, canoes are not the sort of craft in which any man is justified in trying rash experiments on salt water, and, above all, in deep water, or at any great distance from land.

I have seen a very neat plan for heightening the front combings of a canoe at pleasure; but though she be thus the better defended from shipping a sea, yet as the wind thus gains far more hold of her, and, therefore, retards her progress—on the whole, one would be no gainer by the adoption of such plan.

Mr. Samuel Singer, who is a superior shot, both with a large and a small gun, adopted a plan nearly allied to that of the life-boat, which he applied to a canoe of the late Captain Ward's with every confidence of success. Singer fixed air-tight tin boxes in the canoe, in lieu of the copper boxes of a life-boat. The idea was good *in se*, but not in se*a;* for whenever the rising lop hit the canoe, it sounded like a harp—an amazingly good accompaniment for a *singer*, but not at all the thing to suit such birds as know no other note than *quack*. And thus was the Chichester Orpheus, after all his pains, compelled to give up his melodious contrivance of the "musical boxes" as a bad job; though it was reported that, for some time afterwards, he was wont to charm away all melancholic reflections on the occasion, with a morning and evening song—

"*Tin* veniente die, *tin* decedente ca*noe*bat."

Colonel Hawker makes his canoe "a complete life-boat, by closing the open part with oiled Russia duck (buttoned on to brass studs, round the outsides of the bulwarks), which, by means of two large holes in it, is lashed round the waists of the shooters." This plan is somewhat similar to that of the Iceland seal-catcher, and is, no doubt, advantageous in itself; but, for my own part, I confess I do not like the idea of being "lashed" to anything, as, in the case of an upset, you might find it difficult to disengage yourself for a swim. Besides, the covering would occupy a good deal of time in putting on, and, when not wanted, would be much in the way in a canoe.

There is also another plan for rendering a canoe a life-boat; namely, by boarding up the decks close all round, and making the large, buoyant portion thus formed, perfectly air and water-tight, leaving just sufficient opening, and no more, for the men to lie down. The gun to be of a medium size, and fixed by a rope-breeching only, with or without my box-spiral. Such canoe, made for the express purpose, would be preferable to all others for a "risking it" encounter, though comparatively useless at other times. And if, with the addition of a cork swimming-belt, you cannot save yourself, at the least, I fear your chance would be little better in any other canoe—carrying a large gun—which human ingenuity could devise.

DRESSING FOR CANOES.

Principiis obsta sero medicina paratur.

However good and well-seasoned the materials of a canoe, or however well put together and strongly fastened she may be, yet the shock from the recoil of a large gun is so great, it is not a thing to wonder at, that she should, at times, leak a little. But leakage in canoes of all kinds of craft—for they seldom "take up" like other boats—is, to say the least, a most intolerable nuisance, which ought to be remedied immediately; because, being so shallow at the bottom, and all the water draining towards the centre, it will soon be over the bottom boards where you sit — to say nothing of the delay and constant trouble of bailing it out.

Whenever, therefore, a canoe takes to leaking, haul her ashore; and, having mopped her quite clean and dry, prop her up at both ends; fill her half full of clean water, when the drip will soon discover to you the part or parts where the leakage is. To stop this, one plan is, to caulk her with a fine thread of oakum or tow, and then to putty up the seams; another, to pour a mixture of pitch and tar, in a melted state, into the seams, both inside and out; a third, to coat her bottom with white rosin* and mutton suet—and so on.

I would always have the bottom of a canoe painted with two coats of red lead outside, and one inside. But when once a canoe becomes leaky, I have no opinion of any remedy but one for effecting a permanent cure: it is this—first let the

* Appendix, No. 12.

canoe be perfectly dry all over; the best time is after she has been under cover all the summer, because her seams will be as open as possible. Then caulk these seams, inside and out, with *blair* (composed of the dressings of cloth, and a mixture of pitch and tar, well worked together to the consistency of putty), and cover them on the outside with long, narrow lengths of thin sheet-copper, let into the wood to its own depth by means of a sharp chisel; hammer the copper flat and rather into the wood at the edges, then nail it down, on each side, with a single row of short copper tacks. With care, and by always launching her and hauling her ashore on wheels, truck, or rollers, to prevent her bottom from chafing—and, if possible, without the gun or anything heavy being in her at the time—you will never have a drop of water in your canoe from leakage, and the weight of the copper will not exceed three or four pounds. This last plan was entirely my own, and, as it answered admirably with me, and was afterwards successfully adopted by others also, I feel no hesitation in recommending it. Caulking and tarring is all very well for a ship, where there is plenty of hold for it between the planks; but in a canoe the latter are not thick enough to afford sufficient hold of themselves for any length of time; but the copper keeps the blair from swelling out of the seams, and thus the whole becomes consolidated, and renders the canoe—though "as leaky as a basket" before—"as tight as a bottle" now.

I always paint my canoes outside with the best white lead, mixed with sufficient black paint to take off the gloss of a dead white, and make it a dull or bluish white.

The best shade of colour for a canoe is that of the smaller sea-gulls;—when floating on the sea you may perceive their snow-white heads, but their backs are invisible.

MOORING A CANOE.

About twenty feet of light chain, well tested, and somewhat stouter in the link than what is generally used for a small skiff—with a grapnel of four flukes, weighing about seven pounds, and rather long in the shank—make far better moorings for a canoe than a rope and anchor, as well as being more handy, and far more readily stowed away aft; and you should be careful never to allow a knot to remain on the chain.

When at any time you find it expedient to lie at anchor where birds are not near, or expected, wash the canoe, bail out the water, mop her dry—each, or all these, as occasion may require. Look to the guns and ammunition-box, and, in short, regulate all the traps and gear.

On such leisure occasions as these, some gunners wash their birds, though this is best done when ashore. They should always be washed the same way as their feathers lie, and should then be dried in the wind; but merely sponging off the stains of blood is preferable to washing.

TAKING A SHOOTING-CANOE IN TOW.

A canoe with a large gun in tow of a steamer or a sailing vessel would soon be drawn under water, but she goes very well in tow of a coble, or other boat of that size; and as it may sometimes be of use so to take her, I will say a word or two on the subject.

On these occasions it is best not to trust to the chain painter, or, at all events, to it alone. A good, strong tow-rope, placed on the windward side the tug, is far preferable. The canoe should always be towed stern-foremost, because the gun's weight prevents her sheering—just as a coble always tows best stern-foremost behind a ship—"the gripe" keeping the boat steady; and hence, in this way, she would live longer than she would do without the gun. But with the board covers locked over the open part she would never swamp; and there are times when it were very advisable to put the covers on, as, when removed, they may be stowed away, and tied down in a coble whilst a heavy shot is being made, which could not otherwise be effected, or which, at all events, it would not be prudent to attempt without a boat in reserve a quarter of a mile or more to windward, and ready to hoist sail at a moment's warning. I have more than once tried this plan with the best success, and, being rather fond of adventure, with no small satisfaction.

In towing, it is highly advisable that there be "a 'fender" on the stern of the canoe, to prevent damage to the coble.

CRIPPLE-NET.

This is, in principle, the angler's landing-net applied to the raising of fowl, instead of fish, from the surface of the water; for which purpose it was first used by Colonel Hawker, who appears to marvel, as well he may, that no one "till November, 1832," had ever thought of the plan. The Colonel gives a very just description of the great advan-

tages of this net to the gunner, and also a description of the dimensions of the one he recommends, and which, no doubt, answers the purpose very well. I prefer, however, a copper hoop much less in diameter, and a net smaller in the mesh than his; because the hoop is stiffer, sinks quicker—is altogether more handy to use and stow away, and is yet quite sufficiently wide at the top to take; and, with smaller meshes, the net hangs better, especially when made, as it ought to be, with a long tail, in order to catch up three or four ducks one after the other, in quick succession, as you scud past them, under sail. Before you take in the net enclosing the birds, you should always give it a shake or two overboard, to dislodge the wet.

If a cripple pop up from under or alongside the canoe, and dive *instanter*, as frequently is the case, you may often take him when you do not even see him—by observing the direction of his head when he goes under water, and then by darting the net in, overhand, a short distance before him. There is some skill to be shown in aiming with the net as well below as above the surface.

CRIPPLE-STOPPER.

In gunners' language, those birds which are wounded, but which do not fly away after having been shot at, are called "cripples;" and as most wild birds, when not very severely struck, are extremely alert and cunning, if the gunner calculate positively on having to find canoe-room for all his "cripples," he will but too frequently discover that he "has

been reckoning without his host." Hence the necessity for the "cripple-chase" by land and water, and of those useful auxiliaries in this noble science—the "cripple-stopper," and the "cripple-net."

The best cripple-stopper, I should say, is the heaviest double—for a double it always ought to be—that the shooter can wield with perfect ease and quickness; and the same gun will answer for flight-shooting also. It should be got up in a plain way, with brass or German-silver mounting; should be always thinly coated with neat's-foot oil; should be frequently washed out, and, when not in use, kept, at all times, near to a fire, and free from damp. Some gunners have the stock and even the barrel painted white, which certainly is the least conspicuous colour when you are afloat.

In places where the water is shallow, and the tides weak, you may manage to kill cripples with almost any sort of gun; but where there are channels and hot tides, you ought to have one which, when required, will reach them at long distances, and when the use of even Eley's cartridges will often be found anything but false economy; and, in my opinion, cripple-shooting, in its various forms, is excellent practice for a young gunner, besides being, at times, very good sport. A small charge of loose shot in the right barrel, and one of Eley's cartridges in the left, is the best general mode of loading; but, of course, you must vary the charge according to circumstances. When waddings are used, always use punched ones, for expedition's sake; but, if compelled to use but one kind, Eley's blue cartridges, which require no wadding, would be the best; and whenever there is much swell or "lipper on," always load with the stock placed perpendicularly in the centre of the canoe, so that, if your gun or powder-flask slip from your hand, neither go overboard, nor do you lose your equilibrium. I lost a new powder-flask, nearly full of powder,

from neglecting to attend to this precaution. Short barrels suit a cripple-stopper the best, even though it be a heavy gun; two feet seven or eight inches is the best size, as you can load whilst kneeling on one knee, the steadiest position when there is much motion; besides, they are less affected by the wind, and are, every way, more handy in a canoe.

When afloat, never place a loaded gun in such position that, if it were to go off, the charge would pass through any part of the canoe. The muzzle of your small gun should rest on a copper hook, or in a copper ring, fixed on the combings on the starboard-side, so that it is thus elevated above the front deck, whilst the but-end should rest against a chock of wood, nailed with copper nails on to the bottom boards, to prevent the gun from slipping down, and which should be so secured that it cannot be shaken out of its place. The barrels and locks are protected from wet by means of a short canvass curtain, nailed on to the combings with copper tacks, and then painted white; but an oiled Russia-duck gun-cover is a great additional protection.

CRIPPLE-CHASE.

"The whole delight of true sportsmen is in the pursuit."—Pope.

Having now given a description of the two implements so essential in a cripple-chase, I beg to conduct my readers to an actual participation in the sport itself.

The principal points in manœuvring cripples are—

1st. To go about the matter in the likeliest way to secure the most, and, if possible, the whole of them in the shortest space of time.

2nd. To use the net whenever you judiciously can, in order to prevent the noise of a report, to preserve the birds themselves from being further injured with shot, and to save ammunition.

3rd. To lose not a moment in hoisting sail whenever it can be used with advantage; and especially when the wind is such as to admit of the man managing the sail and sculling at the same time, because you are then perfectly at liberty to use the oar, the gun, or the net, as each may be required, and frequently each is required, and in very quick succession too.

CRIPPLE-CHASE ON THE WATER.

After having made a shot with the large gun, go up first to the dead birds, which generally will, and nearly always ought to, exceed your cripples, and as you approach within shoulder-gun shot, be ready with the gun, as some of those apparently dead or *in extremis* may be more lively in reality than they appear to be; and if you observe any swimming "bold," and looking suspiciously at you, as soon as you are well within shot, "let drive," first with one barrel and then with the other, "standing to no repairs." Then, out with the cripple-net and make sure of the dead ones, because one bird in the canoe is worth two on the water, and dead birds are soon boated. This done, if you deem it expedient to follow them at all, instantly give chase to those which are making out the farthest from shore, and then to those which have gone along-shore against the wind, because the sail will soon carry you down upon the remainder afterwards. But if the bulk of the cripples be making in for shore, it will generally be the best policy to pursue them, as, without a dog, or

a following boat, you will, in all probability, lose some of them on the mud, whilst they will stand no chance of escape in the shallow water.

When a bird swims "corky" and bold, he is hit in the body, neck, or head, and may be either recovering fast, and ready for a start, or, "*wice worsea*," may be inwardly bleeding to death; and thus it is sometimes remarkable that birds which you had observed but a moment before sitting upright, and, to all appearance, perfectly well, suddenly droop their heads, flap their wings on the water, and immediately expire; but, if wing-broke, they swim deep, and these, for the most part, are the cripples that dive so plaguily, and which shew you—especially if pinioned only—the most antics, and give you the most trouble, swimming for, perhaps, 200 or 300 yards with no more than the end of their bills out of the water, which is just dribbling over their backs, and when all that you can see of them looks no bigger than a mouse, not very easy to distinguish on a ruffled surface.

If a bird, when you first approach him, dive, and come up fresh and lively, and especially if he keep long under water before he again show himself, and gain upon you in the chase, shoot him as soon as you can, particularly if you have other cripples about; it is a pity to put extra pellets into a bird where it can be avoided, but it is better to do so than not to get him at all, and to lose others into the bargain. I have lost numbers of birds by trying the cripple-net too long, having a mortal aversion to using the gun a second time where it can be avoided. This is one of the great excellencies of the cripple-net, that, with it, you can catch up a pinioned bird, or one but slightly wounded, which, without the net, you would have been compelled to have shot; in the former instance, the bird would be valuable as a present; in the latter, it might have received half the contents of one of Eley's "blues." But

that the gunner who shows his cripples the least quarter will, in the long run, get more of them than will the merciful and sparing one, is indisputable: at the same time, never blow a bird to atoms, but wait for his second appearance at a distance, or let the canoe drift from him and then fire, that is to say, if you can afford the time, if not, aim aside, and do him as little damage as you can; recollect, too, that a bird which is much shot, bleeds profusely, and spoils the appearance of others in the canoe.

When you have a wary, dodging, quick diving cripple to deal with, who just pops up and then down again, like lightning, let your man look one way and you another, for four eyes are none too many here, so that, if possible, he may not jockey you; thus, you have a double chance of keeping him in view, and, ultimately, of bagging him. The best way, when you expect him to show himself, is to bring your gun up—for it is the motion of your arms in doing this which most alarms the bird—to the shoulder, with the finger on the trigger, and fire the instant he appears. This is very smart popping on both sides; and if the reader fancy it tame work and so mighty easy, let him try it; and then let him declare whether snap shots in the field or on the water are the more difficult, even with the advantage of the gun to the shoulder, and especially if the motion of the boat be not very steady. Before now, I have seen a little teal after as many as half-a-dozen successive, well-meant shots at his diminutive exterior, pop up his tiny figure, looking as sly and lively as a stoat in a rabbit-warren, as much as to say "what the war am I?" and, and as it were, like one Oliver, of singularly audacious memory, "asking for some more!"

CRIPPLE-CHASE ON LAND OR SAND.

After having made a successful shot, as it is generally

advisable for one hand to stay in the canoe to take care of her, to keep her afloat, and thus prevent the water splashing over her, and as it would frequently be dangerous for both hands to go ashore, the best mode of managing is this:—Leaving the man in charge of the canoe, take the double and shoot those cripples first that take wing, and then those which are either making for, or have already toddled into, the water. Leave the dead ones, and, slipping the necks (*a la decoyman*) of such as are not dead, or are evidently past all hope of recovery, drop them down instantly as you despatch them. Those birds which sit or stand moping with the feathers all ruffled on their heads, are generally hit in the head or eye only, and are not to be trusted, as they sometimes recover and take sudden leave of you. It is the best plan, therefore, to despatch them also. Now, make the best of your way to the others which are making the best of *their* way, I can assure you, across the sand, or mud, to creeks or other water; pursuing those the first which will be the first to reach the channels, as you can afterwards make sure play at those in the shallows and small creeks. When, however, there is no danger of the canoe filling, drifting away, or grounding unfavourably, then draw her ashore, and help each other to collect the birds, one with the cripple-net in hand, attending to those at home, and the other with the gun pursuing the stragglers. This mode always prevents loss of time and, frequently, loss of birds.

When your cripples are thus pacing it over the sand, at a distance, and you observe one or more of them attempt to fly, but which clearly—from having been pinioned, or wing-broke—cannot rise above a few inches from the ground, lay down your gun, if the sand be dry, and, perhaps, doff your jacket, and run after them. This will keep you fresh for the heats. If the tide be coming in rapidly, you must, of course, be cautious where you lay your gun down, particularly if

the man do not see you in the act. All the anas tribe, or, at all events, gray geese, wigeon, duck, and teal, especially the latter, when crippled at low water, are wont to keep skulking out at the channel sides, and after running from thirty to 100 yards, or more, lay themselves down, with outstretched necks, so close to the ground, between the ridges of the sand, that it is sometimes no easy matter to see them, and at all times they are liable thus to be mistaken for a lump of wreck, &c. The collection of ten or a dozen teal in this way, will give any man, in a gunning dress, a thorough good warming. But it may be said that common sense, and the birds themselves, will teach a man all this, and so they may, in time; but I am vain enough to imagine that the unpractised gunner who does me the honour to repose confidence in my practical instructions, so far as to deem them worthy a place under his gunning-cap, will derive early advantages from them, more than sufficient to compensate the trouble of having imbibed them. Wounded wild fowl will out-manœuvre the best and most experienced old gunners in the world, at times, with all the generalship they can muster. Nay, I have more than once lost them in smooth water, in confined places, and in a manner so wholly unaccountable, and, as it were, supernatural, that I could only suppose that they had filled with water and gone to the bottom; or that a worse fate than even that had awaited them!

Sometimes, whilst engaged in a cripple-chase, another flock is seen to alight at no great distance from the canoe. In this case, pick up the dead and dying birds, and such cripples as you can get into the net; but leave, for the present, such as require the stopper, for fear the report should raise the fresh birds.

When a shooter is alone, and in a small canoe, it is useful to be able to fire a cripple-stopper from either shoulder, the punt being too narrow to admit of turning round in it.

A light-rowing and quick-sailing two-handed canoe will beat a larger and heavier one, out and out, in a cripple-chase, especially where, as is generally the case, more depends on the oar than on the sail.

RANDOM SHOOTING AT WILD FOWL ON THE COAST CONDEMNED.

I HAVE myself, when trying experiments with different kinds of Eley's cartridges—for he obligingly manufactured them on purpose for me, in all kinds of ways—occasionally made extraordinary long shots with such of them as balled for a considerable distance previous to opening; and, again, have seen some of them burst beautifully, just, and only just, as they have passed over the lucky heads of a large flock, without touching a feather, or, perhaps, when a stray pellet has pinked but a single one, where the yellow sand ought to have presented the full view of, at least, a score of killed and wounded —a charming group for the gunner's or the painter's eye.

A balling cartridge is, at best, but a poor dependance; for if it burst at all, who can tell *when* this consummation is to take place? A brilliant shot may thus, it is true, be made, now and then, at an enormous distance; but the losses and mortifying disappointments occasioned by their far more frequent failure, render them undeserving the gunner's notice. Besides, when they do open, they often cut the birds to pieces; and nothing renders birds half so wild as constantly firing at them at immense distances.

If cartridges could be constructed which, with undeviating

certainty, would fly whole for a given distance, and then commence the dispensation of their favours with their usual regularity, they would be extremely valuable. At the same time, the difficulty of adjusting the elevation of the gun with accuracy, at very long distances, would, at at all times, render the effect of the projectile more or less precarious.

In short, though a few long shots, with mould-shot, may be excusably made at swans, which are here to-day and gone to-morrow, yet no regular gunner would ever be guilty of constant random-shooting—the worst policy he can adopt, as regards his own future interest, and a mere puerility as regards the personal satisfaction or reputation attending a chance shot or two at an extraordinary distance. Birds thus shot at, never fancy themselves safe; you may see them alight on a sand a full mile from shore, ship, or human being, and, without any apparent cause, almost immediately jump and fly away, as if affrighted at their own shadows.

A large gun might, without doubt, be loaded so that out of a number of shots at large flocks, birds might be killed at 300 or 400 yards distance, or more; still such miraculous performance would afford no decisive proof of skill—the shooting a single duck on the water, at 100 yards, would be much more so. And as for those "gentlemen jokers," as the gunners call them, who send their whizzing rifle-balls among flocks of wild fowl at half a mile's distance, this enormity, worse than all, if persisted in, would banish the birds altogether from the coast.

HOW TO PRESERVE GUN-BARRELS, LARGE AND SMALL, FROM RUST DURING THE GUNNING RECESS.

The following is Buckel's recipe:—"Pour in, hot, half a pint, of equal parts, of hog's-lard (free from salt) and tar; then take a good gun-rod of oakum, and rub up and down inside the barrel till a good coat is produced. Stop the touchhole with a quill. Observe—the lard is preferable to mutton suet, because it comes out easier and keeps softer along with the tar during the summer."

If I might venture to offer a receipt of my own, as yet untried, it should be the following, which, if applicable to any one gun-barrel, must be so to all:—Get a strong wooden case (with lock and key), of internal dimensions suited to the number and size of your barrels, and fit nicely into it a moveable tin case, or lining; and within this case, at a suitable distance from the bottom—say at two feet four, for barrels two feet eight inches long—fix a plate of tin, with round holes in it sufficiently large to allow the breech ends of the barrels to pass through and to keep the barrels upright.

Clean and dry your barrels thoroughly; and having stopped the touchholes, ventholes, &c., with partridge feathers, or otherwise, place them, breech downwards, perpendicularly in this case; then fill the case with the best neat's-foot oil, until the barrels are covered an inch over the muzzles; and, when the oil is settled, fill up again. Lastly—lock the box.

Your gun-locks, wadding-punches, and any other articles liable to rust, may thus be conveniently kept in a separate box, with or without partitions, and thus will require no looking after for six months.

ON THE BEST MEANS OF PRESERVING COAST GUNS FROM RUST.

Although strong mercurial ointment, which I have never tried, has been much lauded as a remedy for the corrosive rust to which guns are subjected from the humid atmosphere and salt spray on the coast, yet neat's-foot oil, regularly applied, and particularly for two or three feet towards the muzzle-end of a large gun, where it almost always shows most rust, answers very well, provided the oil be genuine, when it will keep for years; and no oil answers so well on the coast for shoulder-guns.

In almost every small town there is some broken down butcher, or old woman, who professes to manufacture this oil in a superior way; but, as it is in considerable demand among farmers for their cart gear, it is best for the gunner to lay in his winter's stock in August or September.

If you do not make it yourself, by boiling cows' heels in a digester, it is generally best procured from some respectable druggist, as no oil is more commonly adulterated than it is with Russian tallow, hog's-lard, rape-oil, &c., all of which, however good in themselves, are inferior in value to the genuine neat's-foot oil.

A thin coating of this oil may be applied to the lock of a large gun externally, but the oiling within ought to be precisely similar to that of a shoulder-gun lock, except that a little more will be required. But as the lock-cover ought nearly always to be used, that affords great protection to the lock from the effects of the weather, &c.

If the breech of a large gun be taken out, after the threads

have been well cleaned, the plug can be turned in again, well anointed with a mixture of the best lock oil and wax candle.

HOW TO PROCURE A GOOD SKIPPER OR SCULLER: WITH RULES FOR SCULLING.

Unless an amateur be a pretty good oarsman, or intend to learn rowing, it is useless, and, indeed, dangerous for him to attempt to go afloat by himself in any sort of canoe; and if he have a large one, to carry two hands, he must, moreover, make himself master of the management of a sprit-sail, and should also be able to steer, though *that* is the least essential of all, as the steerage is nearly always left to the skipper. There is no need to make a toil of a pleasure, but as one man, in a large canoe, can do but little by himself, and as there are times when he could do nothing without additional aid, you must be able to assist him if you mean shooting.

The best sort of man for a skipper is not a heavy-sterned, brandy-faced fellow, but a clean built one, of moderate weight, and great strength of arm; sober, cool, and determined, but not rash, and withal a cheerful fellow; for when you have but one companion on board, and he a sulky bear, or a "stupe," you may have sport, but can have but precious little colloquial amusement. In this respect, I was particularly fortunate at the Tees, as Robin Hood, my attendant, was a book of voyages and travels, in six vols. 4to., neatly bound in blue cloth. Though young, he had seen some service, and had been twice cast away; and his observations clearly shewed

that throughout his checquered course, he had ever been wide awake.

But to return to the points of a good skipper. He ought to have a perfect knowledge of the management of a boat, of sculling in general, and, at the least, a pretty good idea of sculling when lying on his back in a canoe; and if, further, he have a local knowledge of the place you are about to shoot in, as well as a good general knowledge of the prognostics of the weather, so much the better. Either a sailor or a regular gunner, who has been accustomed to the management of a canoe for some years, makes the best skipper; and it is not bad policy to employ one of the latter, because he knows the ground and the favourite haunts of the birds, and you have one gunner less to oppose you.

The man that works the canoe must, in going up to birds, lie flat on his back, with his eyes a little above the wash-boards, so as to command a view of the fore end of the boat and of the birds; the handle of the oar should come on the centre of the breast, with the right elbow on the bottom of the punt, the right hand on the middle part of the oar, whose loom or blade must be under water. The hands ought not to be above the wash-boards, otherwise, the motion of them would scare the birds, and, in going before wind and tide, the right hand only should be used. The greatest art is in working to suit the tide.

When below the swell, let the man scull his hardest, but in descending the waves, when nearing birds, let him keep perfectly still.

WATER-BOOTS,

Or, as they are sometimes called, "black leather boots," are made of calf-skin leather, dressed grain side out,* the opposite way to that of shoe leather; so that, although they will repel the water better than other boots, they will not, like them, bear scratches in covert-shooting, and should, therefore, never be used for such purpose, as it makes them leaky. Their tops may either be doubled down below your knees, or be pulled up considerably above them; but whenever you are about to walk in them, on land, they should be half doubled down, for, when pulled up to the top, your knees are confined too much for free action in walking; and they should be well kept up by means of knitted woollen boot-garters, one inch and a quarter wide, passed through the side and back straps, and tied rather tightly round the knee, for the tighter you keep the boots about the knee, the more easily you will walk; and woollen garters are the softest to the leg. If not thus kept up, the boots will get out of form, will wrinkle at the heel, open in the seam, &c. They ought to be very roomy, so as to contain two (the Hartlepool fishermen wear four) pairs of course yarn knitted stockings, of which one pair should, according to George the Fourth's sensible plan, on all occasions, come up above the knee to the middle; and the moment you have put a boot on, stamp your foot on the floor, that it may go fairly to the bottom. The boots should be square and broad at the toe; and, if you prefer rights and lefts, you must have two lasts made on purpose, for it is a hundred to one that any son

* In curriers' language, the outer, or hair side of the skin, is the "grain," and the inner the "flesh" side; and the former is placed outwards for water-boots, because it is the most impervious to wet.

of Crispin has lasts of this kind by him sufficiently large to suit your foot with the additional pair of stockings. If you determine not to have rights and lefts—and for water-boots, though for such wear alone I prefer the old plan—you should be careful never to wear the same boot on the same leg for two days in succession, but to keep changing them alternately, or otherwise, among the mud and wet, you will soon press them out of form. If you have any nails in the soles they should be copper nails. There is no occasion to have the boots thick and clumsy in either the soles or the upper-leathers; on the contrary, they are far better when made rather light. If the leather be good—which you ought to see to before it is made up—and the boots be well taken care of when not in use, and, above all things, be not hung too near to the fire, they may be made sufficiently waterproof by almost any of the usual receipts applied with the fingers, or a long-haired soft brush, at a moderate distance from the fire; nor is curriers' dubbing, which is a mixture of tallow and neat's-foot oil, by any means the worst application. The great art in dressing, whatever be the composition employed, so long as it be not destructive to the leather, is to use applications as often as they appear to be required; which, whilst they close the pores of the leather, keep it supple for easy wear. Thus, mutton suet, bees'-wax, and rosin, have each a tendency to harden, whilst fish and neat's-foot oils soften the leather; each, therefore, on proper occasions, may be used separately, or in combination, with the best effect, the object being always to preserve the leather between the extremes of soft and hard. Tar is the most durable, at the same time the most disagreeable application, and, as some say, it injures the leather.

After you have been wading on the coast, wash your boots, and mop them clean in fresh water before you take them off; no better place than a horsepond for this job. If the wea-

ther be fine, hang the boots out of doors, otherwise in an airy situation, remote from the fire within doors; and if you be disposed to adopt the fishermen's plan, when half dry, anoint them well with fish-oil. But though the latter may be, at times, a very effective application, the stench of it taints your apparel. The previous washing in fresh water, however, is indispensable, be the after application what it may.

For shooting afloat—except in shallow water, and at night especially—I confess these long boots are no favourites with me; for there is a something not altogether exhilarating in the idea, that, in case of an accident in deep water, you *must* go to the bottom; although, when divested of such lumber, you may be able to swim as gracefully as a swan, and as fast as a porpoise. My usual wear is a pair of short, black, leather boots, which come nearly up to the knees, but no higher; with these on, you may wade almost anywhere you have occasion to go when in a canoe—can chase cripples far better and easier, and they are, at any time, slipped off in a moment as you sit. Not so the longs, which have first to be doubled down and untied—a *long* process—preparatory to the final extrication of your feet.

Too much, however, cannot be said in praise of long boots for flight-shooting; and if the skin towards the top of the boots be not so good as you could wish, or if you want them of unusual length, cut off the bad part, and let a good, new piece be sewed all round.

Many flight-shooters, and some salmon-fishermen, I know, prefer thick, wooden soles to those of leather, their boots being made wide enough to admit two pairs of stockings, and a good lining of dry straw; and this, they contend, will keep the feet warmer than any other plan. I have never yet tried it, but strongly suspect it affords one exception to the cobbler's *dictum*—"There is nothing like leather."

Water-boots are best procured at any fishing or sea-port town, where there is always some Adam Strong to be found, who cuts up good stuff, waxes his thread well, and draws his stiches tight—the prime points in manufacturing water-boots.

WILD FOWL SHOOTING AT THE TEES MOUTH.

"Adieu to thee, fair *Tees*—a vain adieu!
There can be no farewell to scenes like thine;*
The mind is coloured by thy every hue."—Byron.

As some of my readers, at one period or other of their sporting pilgrimage, may possibly hybernize for a season or two, as I have done, at the mouth of the river Tees, I will offer a few desultory remarks upon it. At one time it was my intention to have given a sketch of the Bay itself, distinguishing the various and best sites for birds and seals, the directions of the channels, &c.; but as it has since occurred to me that, by this means, I should not be benefitting the local gunners, and should be depriving our new amateur adventurer of the pleasure of exploring those unknown regions, and becoming gradually familiar with the many objects of interest which they present, I have abandoned the plan. It certainly is not agreeable to stick fast in a channel, or to be left high and dry for a few hours on a mud or sand bank But as there

* There are some very pretty and rather fine views from the Bay—such as the Yorkshire mountain scenery, with Roseberry Topping in the distance, Wilton Castle, Kirkleatham, and a panoramic view of Hartlepool from the seventh buoy.

is no experience like that which a man learns at his own cost, I can only hope that all fresh votaries of the far-resounding tube may be fortunate enough to meet with no more of these little, untoward occurrences, in Tees Bay, than may serve as warnings for the future, and tend to curb that exuberance of joy which uninterrupted success in this noble sport might otherwise produce.

The Bay itself is a salt-water inlet, or arm of the sea, forming, at high water, a noble basin fourteen miles in circumference, and about three in breadth; the whole—with the exception of the river Tees, or main channel, and a few subordinate ones—presenting, at low water, a bed of pretty firm sand, nearly surrounded by that slimy ooze upon which it is well known that all wild fowl and, in very severe weather, partridges and other birds are wont to feed. This ooze may, perhaps, on the average, extend a mile from shore; so that the place itself, to say nothing of Saltholme and Cowpen Marshes, Mordan Cars, and other adjacent favoured spots for feeding inland, is admirably adapted as winter quarters for birds, there being plenty of salt feeding ground for them—plenty of water to swim, and dive, and "wash up" in, and no want of sand upon which, at their leisure, they may sit, stand, or—be shot.

The gunners here call the ooze "the slem"—*quasi*, slime; and at Limerick, in Ireland, the provincial term for it is "the slob." At Exmouth it is called, "the green oaze, or ores;" though, in most places, it is called "the mud:"—and it *is* mud.

ON COAST OR CANOE SHOOTING IN GENERAL, AND IN THE TEES BAY IN PARTICULAR.

"And I have loved thee, Ocean! and my joy
Of youthful sports was on thy breast to be
Borne, like thy bubbles, onward: from a boy
I wantoned with thy breakers—they to me
Were a delight; and if the freshening sea
Made them a terror—'twas a pleasing fear,
For I was, as it were, a child of thee,
And trusted to thy billows far and near,
And laid my hand upon thy mane—as I do here."—Byron.

The plan followed by the leading gunners on the coast, who shoot for their livelihood, is, after all, the most scientific, independent, sporting-like, and the best for an amateur, also, to adopt; at least if he be one who means shooting. Otherwise, he can arrange his "traps" anyhow, according to his fancy; the degree of ease with which he wishes to take the thing; or the quantum of shooting, or of birds, which will satisfy his aspirations and views. The plan to which I allude, is for the gunner to have a small decked craft, not exceeding ten, nor less than six tons burthen; she should be built expressly for the purpose, by Mr. James Blaker, of Southampton—who has already built such—or by some other equally competent ship-builder; and be fitted up, the rather for the gunner's own peculiar personal convenience, than to be looked at, or as a fast sailer. In other words she should have plenty of beam, and be flatter than usual at the bottom, so that, when she takes the ground, she will not lie down on her broadside, and *strain*, but will "sit upright like a duck." In short, her build should be all over anti-yatcht. When afloat, your canoes, in fine

weather, may ride aft of the vessel; but on the appearance of foul, are hauled up, and well secured on deck. Your man, of course, is always on board, when you are not there, to look after the vessel, which is well found in every respect; not forgetting a box of Havannahs, and a few volumes—so much in character with your sport—of Captain Marryatt's delightful novels. You are not much visited in your snug retreat, especially in bad weather; but whenever your friends do favour you with a call, you are studious to "make everybody comfortable," and as we used to say at school, to "send them back laughing"—*i. e. d.*—with a couple of ducks, two couple of teal, a leash of godwits, or something of the sort.

Thus gloriously equipped, the gunner can smile at those who talk of "no place like home;" for he can change *his* home as often as he pleases, and still be always at home. To-day, he pelts the ducks royally on the Yorkshire side of the Bay; to-morrow, smites those geese he owed a grudge to before, on the Durham side; the third day he again shifts his quarters, and about two o'clock, A. M., makes a terrible example of "them ere" teal, chattering in a *bunch* at the water's edge, close in shore; on the fourth day he returns to his old Yorkshire anchorage, where he is agreeably surprised to discover that a fine flock of wigeon has established a haunt during his peaceful absence. Meanwhile, the landsman gunner, who, as the road coachmen say, "has but one home"—in consequence of having been always at the birds in one quarter, has frightened the whole away to parts inaccessible to him, or, perhaps, to any one else, who does not live afloat—and is grumbling for an odd one—with which you *generously* supply him—to make up a couple to send off. But where are those birds he has frightened away? Ten couple of them, I perceive, are suspended in the coolest part of the little vessel! A real "out-and-outer," which simply means one who is never happy

except when out shooting, who visits various parts of our coasts, or who, perhaps, "goes foreign," can do nothing without such a craft; and in all cases it affords you fire and shelter near to your work: and by taking advantage of a high spring tide, having first removed the ballast, &c., to make her as light as possible, you may float her up as far as the tide goes, and either replace the ballast and anchor her there, or —far the better plan in general—roll her bodily away out of reach of tide altogether. In some retired parts, remote from other dwellings, you thus provide a portable wooden house over your head, and, perhaps, combine land with sea-shooting, giving the game and wild fowl a respite alternately; and this is what I call remarkably pretty popping, to say nothing of a roasted pheasant or jack-snipe on board, by way of variety, which is always pleasing. If the weather be too stormy for a canoe, there is then often good flight-shooting, and in these wild uninhabited districts in particular; so that you still need not want a couple of ducks or whews to add to your hamper of game, even though all be required on the same day. This I have often done. A small setter, or spaniel, accustomed to retrieving, will answer all purposes, and will make a good ship-dog beside.

Unless an amateur make either of the watering places, Seaton or Redcar—the former on the Durham, and the latter on the Yorkshire side of the Tees—his head quarters, he cannot enjoy the shooting in the Bay and the comforts of home at the same time. And although he may rough it now and then, or for days in succession, and with a zest too, it does not do always. Greatham Fleet and Cleveland Port, though very well in their way as "ports in a storm," and such, thanks to both, especially to the latter, I have often found them, are, on many accounts, so objectionable that no one would stay constantly at either, unless he were

actually compelled to it, or had a strong natural predilection for the blue devils. Seaton's Nook, and, in fine weather,

——— "'Tis a nook
Most pleasant,"

is situated about two miles from Seaton, and decidedly the best place for a gunner who wishes to keep his canoes on land; and provided he have no vessel afloat, is also decidedly the best shooting station round the whole Bay. But with a vessel, such as I have already described, anchored either in the Tees, at the ninth buoy, or on Coatham sands adjacent (which would be the best general station), he would find Coatham or Redcar far more convenient than Seaton as a place of rendezvous, though the former is nearly four and the latter three miles off. I have always been of opinion that if a person thus equipped and situated, provided the weather be fine, when the birds are always out at sea, were to have his canoe and gun conveyed overland to Redcar, or, at a favourable opportunity, were to take them round by sea, as I have occasionally done, he would have capital sport, by selecting suitable seasons for attack on the open water. About a mile from Coatham, and sometimes much nearer in shore, the birds—almost all duck and wigeon—at times, cover a statute acre, and sit nearly as close to each other as Irish pigs in a Liverpool railway pen. I am persuaded that some heavy, very heavy, shots might thus be made; shots, which would pay well for the ammunition. But I would never take more than one shot in one day, and these days should be "few and far between;" for birds do not care so much for an occasional good rattling, but if constantly plagued, they will, particularly ducks, certainly remove to fresh quarters. On these little pop-out occasions, a coble might attend you as a safeguard, but it should always keep at a distance, say full half a mile from the

birds—till the shot has been made. Immediately on the report, "up sail;" or, "give way all hands;" when up come your Redcar friends, with their partridge poppers, to join in the cripple chase, which lasts nearly an hour, when your friends who have been in ecstasies the while, with the spirit-stirring sport, begin to open out. "Never had better sport in all my life, I *do* declare it;—never so good! A genu*ine* marine *battue!*" "How those ducks did dive, though! Did you ever?"—"No, never!—Couldn't have con*ceiv'd* it unless I had seen it; but seeing, you know, is believing." "What a beautiful selection, though! Such sweet variety of plumage, and so fresh. Duck, mallard, wigeon, and nine little teal, too, I declare! Altogether seventy-five. What a huge heap! Do look at that great big fellow of a mallard there; four pounds weight by the scales, every ounce of it, I'll warrant him! *That* fellow will cry quack no more! See how beautiful the changeable metallic gloss on his azure neck, reposing, as it does, on the charmingly pencilled breast of that cock wigeon! Oh! where is Landseer to day? Would he were here! Surely every gunner should be an artist, and every artist a gunner!" "You *are* a wholesale slaughterer with a vengeance! But what a cloud of them arose when you fired; they absolutely darkened the face of the sun! Our lake at home, to be sure, is sometimes 'black all over with birds,' but here, on the *sea*, you have *oceans* of them!"

Gunner.—"Did I not tell you beforehand that I would show you something, and something to pick up?" "You may say that, for, indeed, you have. I only wish old * * * had been with us. How he would have stared through those spectacles of his! But certainly it was a *spectacle.* Such a *sight* of birds *I* never saw." "I say, I'm just thinking it's no robbery to ask you for a couple now. What *can* you do with them all?"

LITTLE DRAWBACKS TO THE PLEASURES OF LARGE GUN SHOOTING IN GENERAL,

AND IN THE TEES BAY IN PARTICULAR.

"Dogs blink their covey, flints withhold the spark,
And double barrels (damn them) miss their mark!"—BYRON.

"For every white maun hae its black,
And every sweet its sour."

"ALL is not gold that glitters," and however delightful canoe excursions may be to the enthusiast in wild fowl shooting, when everything conspires to favour his wishes, under other circumstances he may possess the patience of a schoolmaster, and still find himself in urgent need of an additional "heavy stock on hand." As, however, with the more important ills of life, so here, his constant motto must be *ne cede malis*—yield not to misfortune. Indeed, if he cannot make up his mind to this, he had far better never go afloat. Wherever the tide flows is "Mr. Anybody's manor;" and as everybody shoots now-a-days, as sure as the receding water bares the ooze, so sure will there be men with guns upon it:—in short, every idle fellow who has nothing else to do, and who, if he had, would do nothing else, or, as Colonel Hawker describes these heroes—"every vagrant who can raise a few shillings to purchase an old musket." Fortunately, however, there is generally plenty of scope, and two men in a canoe, with wind or tide in their favour, will very soon sail or row past a fellow walking on the ooze. But, under less favourable circumstances, you may be balked of shots, and that, too, in the most temper-trying manner. Some lengthy, gawky, Yorkshire yokel races against you with all his might and main, on

the channel-side, and just when an advance of thirty or forty yards would have ensured you a good shot—or, perhaps (as was my own case)—by far the finest shot I ever saw on the water, either before or since—you first see—for, alas! it always is so—

"Medio de fonte leporum, aliquid amari surgit"—

the birds rise in a dense cloud, and immediately afterwards hear the report of Johnny Raw's piece. These are just the occasions, of all others, when you are the most likely to be tempted to fire at random, at all times a foolish plan, and unworthy a good gunner. Bang! goes the gun in the furor of desperation. You, perhaps, bring down but one or two; still, it serves to show your rustic rival what can be done in spite of his stupidity. On the whole, I had but little to complain of, in this respect, in the Tees Bay; for the majority of these clowns are fond of seeing a good shot made with a large gun, and, certainly, it *is* a pretty sight—besides the little private personal interest they feel in a stray cripple. Many a good duck do they thus pick up, and triumphantly enough do they walk off with it, knowing that, when they get home, it will pass as their own shooting, and serve for a boast at the village public. In reality, if they could but see it, the big gunner is a blessing to these mud-walkers, for cripples they may thus lay hold of, whilst not a feather of the duck tribe will they otherwise touch, by day, though they walk for a month. Birds do not usually heed the report of a shoulder-gun at any great distance; but when the wind is favourable, the reverberating roar of a stanchion-gun sets them up a long way off, and the departure of one flock is very apt to unsettle the rest. It is, therefore, generally bad policy, on such days as you have reason to believe your own canoe the only one out, to fire either at small flocks or at random.

Another great nuisance in the main channel of the Tees Bay, is the constant passing and repassing, and, frequently, the anchorage of colliers, steamers, and other vessels, which alarm the birds, and often compel you to give them a very wide berth—and a steamer, especially, is at no time an agreeable companion for a canoe.

Those Redcar cocklers, too, are a constant source of annoyance to the gunners, being very numerous and *spready*, and what with the talking of the women, and the braying of the donkies, keep the birds ever on the move.

But the most tormenting nuisance of all, and which applies, more or less, to all coasts, is that of rival gunners—common and amateur. With both, the best plan, almost invariably, is an amicable compromise; for, if you start to race against each other upon anything like equal terms, it is like going to law—both parties are certain to be losers by it in the end. I have occasionally tried it myself, and have much more frequently seen it tried by others, but scarcely ever knew it succeed. There are ten gunners at Lynn, all of whom shoot for a livelihood; but, when they happen to come in contact with each other, they invariably agree to divide the shot, one only going up to the birds, whilst the other remains "down close" in his canoe until the report of the gun rouses him up, when he makes all the way he can to his companion, in hope to become a useful auxiliary, as he frequently is found to be, in the cripple-chase. Universally, the best plan is to have a signal mutually understood in case of your accidentally coming upon each other's beat, and having a flock dubiously placed. Unless you be in some creek, or under other concealment, or unless the weather be very severe, it never answers for both of you to go up to birds. This is one of the few instances in which the half is more than the whole; so that when ημισυ, &c., again becomes the subject for a Cambridge epigram, the successful candidate will know

where to find a new illustration, and whom to reward with half the gold medal.

With the common gunner, therefore, it is common sense to compromise; and this you will generally find practicable, at least if he know that you can shoot; but with the amateur it may be a point of some little *delicaci*, because *he* may "sit on the opposite side of the house," and may be fired with "that last infirmity of noble minds"—an inextinguishable love of firing; his heraldic motto may, perhaps, be—"the glory, not the prize." In this case, if you *can* come to terms, you must toss for the shot, when the loser either "downs" there and then, and enjoys a *dolce riposo* till the shot is made, or rows off in the opposite direction. But it may so happen that your brother amateur is made of such "impenetrable stuff," that you cannot come to terms; *he* has an appetite for contention, and *will* race. In that case I leave you both to it—

"When Greek meets Greek, then comes the tug of war."

Speed you well, and *occupet extremum scabies!*

As with more serious occupations, so with duck-shooting, one hour early in the morning is generally worth any two during the rest of the day, and, frequently, is the only favourable one throughout the whole. And say not, reader, the gunner's morning hath no charms for thee; for on a beautiful, clear, frosty, health-breathing morn, when the sun has just dispelled the mist, with what lively, I had almost said, with what *sparkling* delight one views the rapid evolutions of the figured host over the slimy ooze—the thick clouds of dunlin, plover, or oxbirds. Byron says—

"Ye stars! which are the poetry of heaven!"

and surely there is a lesser poetry in these dear little birds. Reader, turn thine inquiring eye this way. Mark, I pray thee, the flight of yonder congregated millions—count-

less as those stars! See them suddenly rising in wavy line; now more suddenly darting downwards in denser, darker mass; now, again, gradually elongating in their flight; now in sombre shade, and anon in brightest light*—wheeling in all the radiance of silvery sheen, and all the pliancy and gracefulness of undulating gyration.

But to return to our friend, the amateur. You should endeavour to "take time by the forelock," and to get start of him in the morning; and, if he anticipate you, you have still the opportunity of watching his progress and performances—as Robinson Crusoe used to watch the cannibals—through your perspective glass, which, next to shooting, is really a most agreeable amusement; and if, on his return, it comes on to blow, you may have good reason to congratulate yourself that your friend *did* get the advantage of you; that your "little bark" did *not* "attendant sail;" but that he alone—

"Pursues the triumph, and partakes the gale."

Upon such occasions, for want of better occupation, you, perhaps, amuse yourself with impromptu efforts at his expense. I, at least, once found relief in this way. A brother amateur had got the start of me, and, in returning, was "caught out." It has been mine to witness, from *terra firma*, many heart-rending wrecks at sea; and I have as often felt the force, as I always admired the beauty, of that fine passage of Lucretius:

"Suave, mari magno turbantibus æquora ventis,
E terrâ magnum alterius spectare laborem;
Non quia vexari quemquam est jucunda voluptas,
Sed, quibus ipse malis careas, quia cernere suave est."

* These beautiful, and, to the eye of the spectator, as it were, magically rapid changes in colour, are simply occasioned by changes in the position of the birds themselves; accordingly as they may appear with their white breasts, or dingy backs, turned towards him.

Nevertheless, a man who has a vessel afloat, and who is pretty wide awake, can, at one time or another, get shots, and good ones too, spite of all opposition from rival gunners. Moreover, when it blows half a gale of wind—and, of all others, that is the time for making heavy shots—a long-decked canoe, and two hands, will live and go through the lop, and can be sculled up to birds when the smaller single-handed ones, worked by paddles, would make but poor way, if even they were not swamped. It was during these bad times that the major part of my birds were shot in the Tees Bay; and, on such occasions—how stiffly soever I was opposed, in fair weather, by good-natured rivals —I nearly always found them politely offering their fervent good wishes for my safe return, rather than any factious opposition on the voyage out and home. It is both more pleasing and more profitable to gain experience at the cost of others than at one's own; and I think that my gunning brethren of the Tees—who took many leaves out of my book, and, as I am quite certain, much to their own advantage—will do me the justice to admit, that they had frequently the pleasing opportunity of ascertaining, to a nicety, the utmost that a canoe, of certain dimensions, could do in a sea, without incurring any risk by the exposure to danger of their own more valuable persons. *Suave alterius;* &c.

THE YOUNG GUNNER'S DEBUT ON SALT WATER.

"Inventâ secuit qui primus nave profundum,
Et rudibus remis solicitavit aquas,
Tranquillis primum trepidus se credidit undis,
Littora securo tramite summa legens:
Mox longos tentare sinus et linquere terras,
Et leni cæpit pandere vela Noto.
Ast ubi panlatim præceps audacia crevit,
Cordaque languentem dedidicere metum;
Jam vagus exultat pelago."

On going afloat in a shooting-canoe for the first time, the young gunner may, perhaps, feel a little trepidation; this is both natural and laudable, for rashness is as much to be condemned as immoderate fear. He must not, however, give way to alarm, otherwise he will very probably relinquish the thing at once in disgust, without having given it a proper trial. Previous to procuring an outfit of his own, I would strenuously recommend every one who thinks of turning gunner, to borrow or hire the canoe and gun of some regular practitioner, and, under his guidance, to try how he likes the thing, and especially when there is "part lipper on:" because, if his love of the sport have been engendered merely by vividly written, or oral representations of it, he may find himself disappointed in the anticipated enjoyment. I know many ardent field sportsmen who would not go afloat in a canoe at any price; I know some who have often talked about it, but who, I opine, will make talking serve till elbow-chair time comes on; and I know a few who, after having gone to no small expense in procuring the requisites to carry on the "birdy warfare,"

have dropped it before they have dropped a bird; when gun, canoe, and all "the traps" have been sold—"considerably under prime cost."

Unless the *afflatus* have been liberally bestowed upon a man to begin with, I do not consider this a description of sport likely to win upon him; though some few there are who could not be weaned from it. Buckel, though he shoots for his living, declares that he would not purchase the sweets of perfect independence at the price of entire restriction from the use of his canoe and gun. Surely this is "the ruling passion strong" *in life*.

But to return to the *début*. My own was not unaccompanied by peculiar feelings:

"Tranquillis primum trepidus se credidit undis;"

and I was careful to keep coasting along close in shore:

"Littora securo tramite summa legens."

Soon, however, I ventured from Cleveland Port, and crossed the channel and the Tees Bay, with sail expanding to a southerly breeze, and, ere long, reached Seaton's friendly nook.

"Mox longos tentare sinus, et linquere terras,
Et leni cæpit pandere vela Noto."

My confidence gradually increasing, I began to venture more, and ultimately to "risk it:"

"——— paulatim præceps audacia crevit:"

till at length that which had been an object of awe, if not of dread, became a cherished delight. And once on a day—I remember it well—when in my fragile bark, on the bright blue sea off Coatham, the towers of Wilton Castle lay on my right; on my left, the frowning projections of Huntcliffe; behind me lay the glorious main; before me, Redcar's bare

rocks, future foundation of northern Piræus;* the view was fine, but, with me, the main attraction was the ducks on the water. Believe me, reader, I then sighed for no Sulpician prospect of ruined cities, no Ægina, Megara, nor Corinth, nor yet for wafted odours from shores of

"Araby the Blest;"

My mind, serene as that lovely air, and tranquil as that deep, expanded with the scene, and, as I poised the labouring oar, I whispered to myself what I thought, and felt what I said—

"Jam vagus exultat pelago!"

Thou, too, reader, mayest experience the same. Go on and prosper.

SWIMMING OR SAFETY-BELTS.

Cavendo tutus.

No person who goes afloat in any sort of craft, in deep water, and, least of all, in a canoe or shooting-punt, be he a swimmer or be he not, ought to neglect taking with him that useful auxiliary and portable *vade mecum*—a swimming-belt. The best swimmer in the world may be taken ill suddenly with the cramp, or otherwise, especially in severe weather, or may be wrecked either in a heavy sea, close in shore, or at a considerable distance from it; but, with the aid of the above-named belt, he not only cannot sink, but may be enabled to save himself, with one twentieth part of the exertion that he would otherwise be compelled to use, if, indeed,

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he could save himself at all; and he may also be the means of preserving others. Moreover, if he perish, his *corpus*, at the least, will be washed ashore for the satisfaction of his disconsolate friends.

After having perpetrated sundry risking bouts in shooting-canoes, I began to entertain serious thoughts about a swimming-belt, and accordingly procured one of waterproof cloth, purposely manufactured to my own order, of larger dimensions than common, but found that the tape straps under the arms wore with rowing; and, furthermore, a little reflection convinced me that all air-tube belts of cloth or metal are so far insecure in principle (from their liability to be punctured by the sharp edge of a rock, concealed near the surface of the sea, a nail or splinter in the side of a boat, or part of a wreck, &c.), that they cannot honestly be "warranted sound," or depended upon as a means of protection in the hour of danger.

Andrew's "Efficient Cork Safety Belt," manufactured and sold by W. Andrew, 26, Fountain Street, Manchester, is the best, for general use, with which I am acquainted, and for a canoe in wild fowl shooting; especially as in the latter sort of craft anything very bulky is incommodious.

But the most efficient floating apparatus of all, which also Mr. A. can manufacture, where expense and bulk are not matters of moment, is a very large and thick belt of cork, with a little mast and sail to it, by which means not only may the wearer himself be propelled to land much faster, and with much less exertion than he could swim thither, but also by having a line attached at one extremity to the belt, and, at the other, to a raft covered with part of a ship's sail, he may, in cases of shipwreck, occasionally be the means of saving others.

RISKING IT;

OR HOW TO GET THE BEST SHOTS AND THE MOST BIRDS IN THE WORST WEATHER.

"Quod licet ingratum est: quod non licet acrius uret,
Si unquam Danaen habuisset ænea turris
Non esset Danae de Jove facta parens."
Ov. Amor. Eleg. xix. 3.

"Man is and ever will be mad."—Kennedy.

I always intended a chapter on this subject, and this appears to be the proper place for its introduction. The reader must not be too fastidious; for though the term "risking it" may sound somewhat discordant to "ears polite," still it is not destitute of significance; at all events it was well understood by my attendant, Robin Hood, to whom I am perfectly willing to concede the sole merit of its origination.

Know ye then, reader, that when blustering winds raise large breakers on the sea, the birds, no longer able to sit at ease or even in safety* there, flock into the more sheltered bay by hundreds. Some alight in one part and some in another; but there are a few favourite spots to which, if the storm commence at low water, they usually repair at once; otherwise they alight elsewhere, and gradually drift down with the tide to these particular localities, and, as the sand becomes exposed, waddle out on the channel sides, like city aldermen, by scores, and sit down close together, as wild birds always do in

* Appendix, No. 14.

bad weather, to preserve each other from catching cold, and with their breasts to the wind to keep their feathers close and unruffled. Some place their bills under their wings, others upon their breasts, and thus situated, when viewed with the naked eye at the distance of three quarters of a mile or so from shore, they bear a strong resemblance to a cluster of "black diamonds." They *are* black diamonds in the gunner's eye! Reader, thou'st seen the fire-flash of the eager greyhound's eye as he "strains on the start" when "the game's afoot:" thou'st seen, perhaps, the half-starved urchin looking little knives and forks through window at many-linked sausages: perhaps, too, thou thyself hast dared to look askance at well matured, well-shouldered hothouse grapes — Alexandria's Muscat say—or rich Tokay—when hothouse grapes were sour! Just so, reader, believe me, doth the gunner look at this coal-black tribe of well-placed—most inviting—most forbidding birds! The amateur gazes anxiously and in silence, and so doth trusty Robin Hood, and then they look at each other—shake their heads and say—"It won't do yet." The tide ebbs *slow*.—It's *neap* tides, now about.—The weather is not *quite* so bad. Suddenly a voice is heard: "Shall we risk it, sir?" Agreed.

PREPARATORY ARRANGEMENTS FOR "RISKING IT,"

With some Remarks on the superior Advantages of the Author's new Plan of managing a Shooting-punt, or Canoe.

———"libens
Insanientem navita Bosporum
Tentabo." HORAT. ODE IV. Lib. iii.
"Misce stultitiam consiliis brevem."
ODE XII. Lib. iii.

As this sort of work—to use the emphatic words of John Henry Franklin, of Seaton—himself an excellent gunner, and as suitable a person as any I know to have accompanied his namesake in his overland expedition, being healthy, robust, hardy, intelligent, and in the prime of life—is "but a

shyish concern at best," I shall be minute in my statements as to what I consider the best means of ensuring safety. I cannot, however, and do not recommend the plan, because "a *can*noo"—as the Durham gunners call it—is *but* "a *can*noo," and because no man ought to expose himself to risk unnecessarily, and, least of all, for the sake of a parcel of ducks. I, therefore, hereby issue my solemn and precautionary monitions to all eldest sons, and, above all, to all "only hopes of families"—the darling idols of anxious and affectionate mothers, never to engage in "risking-it" adventures, for fear of accidents of an *overwhelming* description.

When, however, these "hair-breadth 'scapes" are past, we somehow or other like to talk about them; they are *our* "chances of the steeple-chase;" and a work of this nature would, probably, be incomplete without them; for, certainly, they have a direct tendency to give *a finish*—for every time you "bear a hand," you may be "putting the *last* hand to to the work;" nor is there any one stroke of your oar which may not prove "a *finishing* stroke." Man, however—as my worthy preceptor, Dr. Sleath, of Repton, used to say of his black pony—is "an adventurous animal,"* and if he will be fool enough to risk it, he had best do so under the least hazardous circumstances, for it is a game in which he cannot afford to throw a chance away.

Your primary object ought to be, to have as little weight in the canoe as you can avoid. You must, therefore, leave ashore many things which, on ordinary occasions, you would take out: some of these—as mast, sail, sprit, gun, gun-rods, &c.—would be worse than useless for this undertaking, your intention being merely to pop out—say for three quarters of a mile, and back—to make a single shot, and home again as fast as you can.

* See Appendix, No. 15.

But it will be best, perhaps, to name what you must take with you, rather than what you must not:—

Two pairs of movable copper thowls, well fitted to the holes for their reception, which should be kept quite free from sand:—one light elm,* or ash oar, such as you find the best adapted for quick work in general, and which you can feather with ease, as you must do at every stroke:—a duplicate oar, of stout ash, such as you cannot break, in case the other give way:—two proper, previously well-tried, but not too much worn, ash sculling-oars:—one light cripple-net:—one double cripple-stopper (loaded) in loose waterproof case:—two or three of Eley's cartridges for same, in left side waistcoat pocket:—a small powder-flask, containing but four or five charges of best fine powder, in your left breast waistcoat pocket:—a few caps and tubes, loose, and a few in a small, thin, metallic box in your right hand waistcoat pocket:—one ammunition-box—for man to sit to scull on (which, also, when lying on his back, affords support to his neck)—containing nothing but a plug or two of oakum, previously well fitted to the gun muzzle, to plug the gun with when discharged—a stopper, with a brass spring, modelled after those in use for soldiers' muskets, would be the best, as being the tighter fit, and the quicker applied:—two wooden dishes, painted *red*, for bailing out the water, the man steering and sculling with one hand whilst he bails with the other; you may also row with one hand and bail with the other, at a pinch. In some cases, a canoe would thus bear you harmless when she otherwise could not live; but, of course, you are then pretty nearly *in extremis!* We never found it absolutely essential to our safety to bail afloat, but have often done it for our personal comfort; for, at times, she will take in a "good

* A piece of well-seasoned straight-grained elm makes an excellent canoe oar; those of deal have little spring in them, and are apt to break.

sup of water," especially when going up to birds in rough weather, when the stem-piece is unshipped. One stiff, narrow, oaken foot-board—an addition of my own—by means of which you can pull much stronger and with far greater ease to yourself than by placing your feet against the timbers :—one large gun, carefully loaded,* and primed with copper tube, a lock-cover tied close down, and the muzzle plugged, not too tightly, with oakum. Where you can effect a good landing, as on a sand side, you will either bail out, or load, much quicker than when afloat.

Rugs of all kinds are worse than useless in this operation, for the man, when lying down, has, for the most part, but light labour, having little more to do than steer the canoe, as the wind will drive her as far as you wish towards the birds; and you are decidedly better without any rug. They are spongy, and, when saturated with wet, are extremely heavy, comfortless, and disagreeable ; for my own part, I dislike them at all times, except at night, when lying at anchor, waiting the flowing tide, or listening to birds on the feed ; then they are really an acquisition.

So much for all the requisite traps, which should be adjusted as follows :—the cripple-net on the left side the gun, with its handle under deck ; the large and small duplicate oars on the right, with their blades similarly placed; the two dishes aft, and the spare thowls in the locker alongside of you. If you have "good boat water" to within seventy or eighty yards of the birds, and they appear well settled—of which you can generally form a pretty correct idea before you start—I should recommend loose shot, or a tallow-cartridge, in preference to Eley's, because you will kill more birds, and be within shot of your cripples so much sooner. The patent cartridge, however, is the most certain ; for, if the birds sit well, you can employ

* See Appendix, No. 16.

your own discretion as to distance; whereas, if they prove wide awake and wary, you are the best prepared for a long shot.

If you have time to collect the dead birds, and such of your cripples as are disabled from regaining the water, you may consider yourself pretty lucky. Let your "outward bound" cripples take care of themselves, and do you the same.

But, reader, it is high time now to be off! Your friends on shore are on the sand-hills watching your movements through their telescopes. The birds are remarkably well placed on the sand in "the bight" near the mouth of the middle channel.—How I wish you may get 'em!—You doff your white coloured flannel or fearnought jacket, double it, and either sit down upon it, or put it alongside you; next your skin you have a flannel waistcoat with sleeves to the wrists; over this, your linen shirt; and over these, a white Guernsey frock, with broad worsted braces of a corresponding colour, and a white shag waistcoat, well-lined at the back, over all. You feel yourself light for the season; commence slowly, soon experience a healthy glow, and get your back well down to the work. You have a thick white Russia-duck gunning cap, lined with flannel; and as the wind blows so hard, I perceive you have tied it under your chin with strings, or tape ribands, sewed to its sides, and which, on ordinary occasions, are put within the cap; you look rather queer about the head certainly, but no matter. Robin Hood, too, properly accoutred, has, I perceive, got to work in thorough good earnest, and it is quite clear if you don't reach the birds, it will be no fault of his. And now you round the fourth buoy, and come into the thick of it, and a smothering looking lipper it is. Anthony Hunter,* the Hartlepool pilot,

* Appendix, No. 17.

here passes you in his coble, and salutes you with—"You *cannot live to-day!*" "We'll risk it," say you, and away you go. The wind alone would take you rapidly to the birds, but you row and scull away to make the shortest possible work of it; for the young flood will soon be making. Now, you are within 300 yards of the critics (mallards), gently you raise your oar from the water, just, and only just, over the top of the thowls, avoiding all sudden motion and noise, and sliding it as gently under the deck handle-foremost; you next unship stem-piece and foot-board, lie down, and, as you lie, unship thowls and put them into locker; untie lock-cover, but don't draw it off yet; draw your jacket over your shoulders or not, as may be, and, taking a primer out of your pocket, lay it in a small cavity in the bottom boards, just under the stock, to be ready to seize hold of, instantaneously, in case of a misfire; next draw off lock-cover gradually, and cock gun. You are now nearly opposite to the birds, and presently he will bring the canoe quite end on to them. You must be very quick, both in taking aim rather low, and in pulling the trigger; and, REMEMBER, both must be done as she is rising on the swell, or the greatest part, if not the whole, of your charge will find its way to the bottom of the sea, betwixt you and the birds, in which case none will be *kilt*; and on your return to port you will be much mortified to reflect what poor pay you have received for "risking it," and how, after having braved "the dangers of the seas," you have yet to encounter a much severer trial of your fortitude in the but ill-dissembled smiles, if not, the "dread laugh," of your greeting friends at the Nook. You must, I repeat it, be very quick in firing, for the canoe, being now broadside on to the wind, will drift past the birds in a moment, when you will both lose ground rapidly and irrecoverably, and have to shoot more in the wind's eye.

I am truly sorry to observe that the flock have changed

their position, and are not near so good a shot as they were when you left the Nook; besides the lop runs so high, you can only see their heads and necks now and then. Look out, now's your time! Shoot well to windward* of the thickest of them, or you will only skirt the flock to leeward. Press the hollow of your shoulder hard against the but, and keep your gun steady. Pull! off she goes! Now—on stem-piece—on lock-cover—ship-thowls—out oar. Now you are sufficiently near, and the water is shallow enough for Robin to land. He opens box and seizes oakum-plug—steps out—plugs gun; meanwhile you draw out cripple-net and hand it to him. Robin makes to birds—you get double ready—one rises, he's down—there's another making off—fire! he, too, is on his back; another among the lipper—can see no more of him; no use loading again. Put double under canvass curtain, and keep canoe off; Robin returns with eleven birds, ten duck and mallard, and one wigeon—pretty well considering all things. Stow birds aft, bail out water, fix foot-board, out-oars, strong wind, and a head sea against you until you double the fourth buoy. You both have your work cut out, and that no trifling labour. You *do* labour

——— "Fortiter occupa
Portum!"

and do at length reach the Nook; although the canoe is nearly one-third full of water, and miserably heavy to row.

You are very wet, and your first care is to change your gunning dress for fresh apparel.

In this sort of desperate game the grand point to be attended to, is the proper steerage of the canoe, taking her, in general, rather across the lipper than end on; the man sculling, and you rowing, slow or quick, according to the lop you have

* Appendix, No. 18.

to meet. You rowing dry, and neatly dipping, not dashing, your oar into the proper places which you must ascertain by sitting rather sideways, and giving a sort of jockey's peep over your shoulder to see what's coming, and at what pace, so as to keep time and place, and pull her through with the best effect. As the sea strikes the stem-piece, you will, now and then, come in for a gratuitous shower bath, and as the cold water trickles down your warm back, the shock may elicit a sob or two, which, however, is quite natural. Your man being seated so far aft, and facing the lipper, comes in for a far less bountiful share of these dashing favours of Neptune.

I am thoroughly convinced that my plan—for my plan it was—of managing a canoe, upon the principle of one rowing with a single long oar, instead of a pair of short ones, whilst the other sits aft to scull and steer at the same time, or, "a scull oar and a pull oar," is, for such craft, of all other plans, incomparably the best. For,

1st. The weight is better and more conveniently adjusted.

2nd. You have less lumber aboard.

3rd. You have less noise, less weight, and less show in oars,* row-locks, and thowl-pins.

4th. You are far more conveniently placed in every way, and not the least so in being Janus-headed to descry, in a moment, both birds and danger all around.

5th. Less ground is lost, because instead of sheering about and griping, as these canoes, from their lengthy build always

* Instead of the plash of one or, perhaps, of two pairs of oars, you have but a single blade visible, and which, by the way, should be feathered to render it the less so; and as it is immaterial, as regards the steerage of the punt, on which side you row, you should always put your oar out on that which is the least exposed to the view of the birds.

will do, more or less, the skipper can keep her perfectly straight, and, if she deviate in her course, can, in an instant, steer her to a hair.

On all these accounts, and on the one last named in particular, you can go much faster than with two pairs of oars. We could always keep up, or very nearly so, with a fast-rowing single-handed canoe, well pulled in smooth water, and in strong lipper could give her the go-by.

It was the decided opinion of Robin Hood, who, though but a young man, is a most clever and experienced seaman, one of the best swimmers in Great Britain, and as hardy and brave a little fellow as ever went afloat, or chewed pig-tail, that, had we rowed in the usual way, on the above-named occasion, the words of Hunter would have been verified;* and I am, myself, as thoroughly persuaded of the same. But, seated as he was, so far aft, and facing the danger, he could see what was coming to us, could give his directions to me as to pulling, and, in the twinkling of an eye, could steer the canoe for the best. In short, he is the only man I know, excepting Buckel, and he is rather too heavy, with whom I would have ventured out on that occasion, or with whom I would try a thing of the sort again. It was, indeed, a most masterly piece of seamanship on his part, with which I was delighted at the time, and shall never think of but with admiration. Unless I had seen it, I could not have believed it possible for a canoe like her, and, above all, with that ponderous gun so far forward on her bow, to have gone through what we did go

* As it was, there was one wave which had nearly done for us: it must surely have been a *tenth* wave.

"Vastius insurgens decimæ ruit impetus undæ."—Ov. Met. ii. 530.

And again,

"Qui venit hic fluctus, fluctus supereminet omnes,
Posterior nono est, undecimoque prior."—Trist. Lib. 1. Eleg. 2.

through, at all, shipping, also, comparatively speaking, so little water.

Such, reader, is the best explanation I have to offer to thee on "risking it," and such my counsel to all who may become adventurers in the like expeditions. The case I have been endeavouring to delineate is not one of the imagination, but the faithful record of what—on the 19th day of December, 1835, as many who were eye-witnesses can attest — actually took place; and, certainly, of many little outbreaks during a northerly wind, and a cloudy sky, the "shyest concern" in which I was ever engaged, and the most adventurous of all my riskings. The same day was rendered somewhat memorable by the occurrence, soon after our expedition, of two shipwrecks at the third buoy; namely, of the *Mentor* of Arbroath and the *Caroline* of Leith; the latter soon became a total wreck. She was laden with butts of sherry, from Cadiz, a great portion of which was shamefully plundered in the true Cornwall "wrecking" style. There was something both very remarkable and providential attending these wrecks; both ships struck nearly together; the crews of both took to their boats within a few minutes of each other; both were marvellously preserved, having been frequently near to seas which, had they, at that critical moment, broken upon them, would have swamped and capsized their boats in an instant; both vessels were afloat again within half an hour of their having been thus abandoned, when, had there been but a boy at the helm, both might have been taken into a place of safety in less than five minutes; both drifted ashore within a short time and distance of each other; the *Caroline* a total wreck, as I have already stated, and the *Mentor*, quite new, seriously damaged. The poor fellows got thoroughly drenched, and some of them lost their clothes. I felt happy to offer them such small accommodations as the

cabin of my little sloop afforded, upon whose deck were then lying fourteen ducks and one wigeon, the produce of that morning's shooting; for, gentle reader, you must know we had bagged four previously to "the great go" above described.

On these occasions by far the finest birds are shot, the fattest and biggest—old ducks and mallards, too cunning to be approached at other times, too wary for the flight-shooter, and not to be caught with chaff in a decoy. These are the regular Norwegians, which always sit out at sea during the day, except when the storm drives them into harbour. They are rarely, if ever, seen in gentlemen's ponds.

As this appears to have been a day fraught with adventure, and one of which, as regards shooting, I may, with Pliny, exclaim, "*O diem lætum, notandumque mihi candissimo calculo!*" I will just relate a somewhat curious coincidence. The above-mentioned four wild ducks I brought down out of six, just as they arose from the water. One of them, a very fine mallard, attempted to fly off, but, after having risen to a certain height, being beaten back by the force of the wind, he kept lowering gradually till he descended within a few inches of my nose. Robin Hood sang out, "Catch him!" I did get hold of him, and retained some of his feathers, but my hands being rather benumbed, I was unable to keep him. The cripple-net, however, soon brought him to hand. Though I "missed my tip" in this instance, I have more than once caught partridges and rooks, and dare say that many other shooters have done the same.

I feel that I have trespassed largely on the patience of my readers with the details of my riskings at the risk of incurring their severe displeasure, but how much soever the generality of them may be disposed to smile at my minuteness of detail, sure I am, should any be induced to expose himself to similar hazards, *he*, at least, will not be among the number.

The middle course is said to be the safest; and, certainly, that weather which partakes of the due medium betwixt the extremes of fair and foul, is the pleasantest, and, where you have the place to yourself, the most killing for wild fowl. But, whilst I deprecate risking outrages, I can assure the gunner that, if he intend to get birds, at least in such places as the Tees Bay, he will find it necessary, sometimes, to adopt the advice of Gray, and—

"Be with caution bold."

NIGHT SHOOTING AFLOAT.

"Luna ferè tremulum præbebat lumen eunti."—Ovid.

"——— Nor did he pass unmoved the gentle scene,
For many a joy could he from night's soft presence glean."

"Then stealing with the muffled oar."—Byron.

Of all modes of wild fowl shooting, that by night is, perhaps, the most destructive: for how many a gunner may exclaim, with the charming poet,* who died too early for his fame—"the night has been everything to me." And though your gunner hath no taste for lengthened lucubrations, still he hath his brilliant moments; though no Demosthenes, he yet dazzleth with his lightning, and astoundeth with his thunder, and always killeth his birds—as the experienced cook roasteth them—before a quick fire. Nevertheless, although I have had a fair share of experience in it, I cannot say I like

* H. K. White.

night near so well as open day shooting. If you have to shoot at birds on the water by night, even a moderate ripple on the surface blackens it, and renders them very difficult to be distinguished, and often wholly invisible; and if the night be dark, you are very liable to lose some of your cripples on the mud, which, to me, has always been a source of very great annoyance, as I hate the idea of birds being thus lost, whatever be the number actually killed. True it is, you may take a retriever out in the canoe, and certainly there *is* something extremely pleasing, uncommonly sporting-like, and rather romantic in the idea of having your faithful dog as your faithful nocturnal companion; and something highly satisfactory and, in no small degree, refreshing in his fetching all the cripples to you, one by one, and sometimes two at once, in the dark. But in return for these his extremely interesting services, he so besmears the canoe with mud, and wets you so with shaking himself, that I must confess I always preferred his room to his company, although, in my time, I have had some as good retrievers as man need desire. A dog in a following boat might be well enough; but where the water is shallow, as generally is the case in night shooting, this plan is not so readily accomplished; and, besides, there is a risk of noise from it. Shooting by moon or star light is quite another thing; because then you can see what you are about; but during the two winters that I shot in the Tees Bay, there were no stars except overhead; whereas, to be able to make any use of them, you want them low down towards the verge of the horizon. In short, frosty weather is, perhaps, the only time when you are favoured with stellary illumination in perfection. You may carry on night shooting at other times, but, if you do, it will be "in spite of your stars."

For night work, and especially in such places as the Tees Bay, I should generally prefer a small, light canoe, with the

shooter alone in it, to a large one with two hands aboard; you make less noise and show, and, above all, can float in so much shallower water; and, for this kind of shooting, it is no recommendation for a gun to shoot too close. On some parts of the coast, a single individual thus equipped will either by day or night beat any other description of canoe and gun with two persons in it, on account of the greater depth of water which the latter must necessarily draw, and because birds generally sit better in shallow water, and particularly at the edge of it, than where it is deeper. In all cases where the water is shallow, the small canoe has considerable advantage in propinquity of approach, and, in some instances, will advance nearer in shore by many gun-shot lengths; and it is no use having a very large gun if you cannot, by any means, convey it within shot of birds. The best plan, of course, is for the shooter to have two canoes and proportionately large guns, whereby he is armed at all points, and can take out either at pleasure. A good deal of execution may sometimes be done from a small canoe—(which, though usually worked with paddles, has also a fixed sculling crotch)—and with a stout shoulder-gun, as well in the finest as in the foulest weather; but, in the latter case, you must have a sculler along with you. With a little management, both of you may find room enough to lie pretty comfortably, and by keeping close under a weather shore, may sometimes, in boisterous weather, get up to birds when you could do nothing with a large canoe and a heavy gun. In proof of the success of this plan in the daytime, I quote one instance from my gunning log:—

"October 25, 1834, with heavy double, four drams and a half of powder in each barrel, and Eley's cartridges, each containing two ounces and a quarter of shot—at a large flock of widgeon—boated eighteen; namely, thirteen first barrel, sitting, and five second barrel, flying; but on landing at the

Nook, one of them crept from under the deck, took wing, and flew away."*

Previous to starting on this "little go," I drew the cartridges in each barrel, calculating upon a long shot only, if I got one at all. But here I was deceived; for had I not done this, and changed the shot, the number killed must have been much greater; for, as it happened, we got well within shot of the birds. But, in reloading, I substituted A for No. 1 in the right barrel, and AA for B in the left. I had also a wadding upon the shot in each barrel; whereas, in my opinion, the right hand barrel, which I usually fire first, would have been better without such wadding. This shot was one of the finest I ever had or saw; and had there been a small stanchion-gun in the canoe instead of only the shoulder double, the number killed must have been very considerable, and particularly if the gun had been loaded with loose shot. I have no doubt that Franklin and others, who witnessed this shot from the shore, would corroborate my opinion.

But to return to night shooting. No. 1, loose shot, is preferable to any sort of cartridge, unless it be during bright moon or star light, when you can sometimes distinguish the birds at long distances; and even then, loose shot is generally preferable, provided you have water sufficient to take you within seventy or eighty yards of the birds. But if your gun happen to be loaded already with Eley's cartridge, the best plan, previous to your pushing off, will be to draw the wadding upon it, which will cause the shot to spread much

* This trick has been played me more than once, in consequence either of the bird being, to all appearance, dead, and, therefore, escaping any *additional killing;* or from the *coup de grâce* having been inefficiently given. The only way of doing the business neatly, expeditiously, and effectively, is, to acquire the decoyman's knack of slipping their necks, or "necking" them, by which means the head is completely separated from the vertebræ of the neck without the skin being broken.

more. I have frequently found the benefit of this, and will here quote from my memoranda two instances, out of many, in support of the fact:—

"October 15, 1834, at 2 o'clock, A. M., boated thirteen teal at one shot. The charge, two ounces and a half of powder, and one pound 3 A, with no wadding at the top.

"November 25, 1835, at dusk, bagged six curlews and four godwits at one shot. Charge, two ounces and a half of powder, and one pound No. 1 ; no top wadding."

Now in regard to the former of these two shots I did well to draw the wadding, but had I, on the previous evening, drawn the cartridge, or fired the gun and reloaded with smaller shot, I should have done better; for the extra teal thereby secured would, in all probability, have amply repaid the loss of the charge.

As regards the latter shot, I remember it well, and have no doubt Robin Hood will do the same. Coming home late one evening, we were just about to double the fourth buoy at dusk, where, by the way, we had no business to have been at that time, when we heard the screams of sundry curlews on the sand not far off. We knew we should be unable to distinguish a shade of them beyond fifty or sixty yards at the utmost. Accordingly, having receded a little, I gently dropped the grapnel, and silently drew out the wadding on the shot. We then went up until the canoe began "to smell the ground," when I shot to the sound—or, at best, at a sort of "darkness visible," or Manchester moonlight—rather than at what I could feel certain were birds. Out stepped Robin Hood, and, repairing to the spot where he imagined the scene of slaughter to have been—after having paced backwards and forwards for some time on the sand—he sang out, "You've missed them all?" "No, no!" replied I, "that cannot be." "They're here," said he, "all in a lump." He then returned

with six curlews and four godwits, three or four of which were a good deal shivered. Had the gun been loaded with loose shot, I feel certain I should have bagged double the number on this occasion, for, from the clamour of those which escaped, it was quite clear that the levee then being held, but from which all parties made a precipitate retreat, in consequence of a loud cry of "*fire!*" had been numerously attended. On the contrary, had I not drawn the wadding upon the cartridge, I should, most probably, have not got half as many as I did, and even those few would have been blown to atoms, and, therefore, would not have been worth picking up. But if the shooter entertain a doubt about the matter, let him, with any gun, try two patent cartridges at a large target, the one with, and the other without wadding upon it, and then let him judge for himself.

During the daytime, open as the weather then was, no canoe could have approached within 200 yards of those curlews.

There is nothing like a stanchion-gun securely fixed for a steady, good, safe, and killing shot; a shoulder-gun, when you are laid down, being so very liable to fly upwards, like the tail of a whale, and to give you an ugly thump on the cheek, or a flush hit on the nasal organ. *Experto crede!* At the same time, a shoulder double, as an *addendum*, is indispensable in a canoe of any sort; because, to say nothing of its use as a cripple-stopper, it may, sometimes, come into play when the large gun either could not be brought to bear, or where, if it could, it would not be worth while to waste a large charge, or would be impolitic to fire at all.

I need scarcely inform the uninitiated gunner, to whom I so strongly recommend the single-handed canoe for occasional use by day, and for night work generally, that there is no royal road to expertness in its management. He must

not, therefore, expect to step into a canoe a gunner ready made. He may be a very accomplished young fellow indeed in a skiff, or a very Vincent or a Shadwell in wager boat, or light-constructed funny. Nay, he may be a capital oarsman in a large canoe, but the management of paddles, and especially in a tide-way, is quite another sort of thing. In the one case he sits him down like a gentleman; in the other, he is regularly *floored* at the bottom of his canoe, and lies on his stomach like a flat fish. The work, too, is far more laborious and difficult, and by no means calculated to increase the warmth of his fingers' ends. My advice, therefore, to the young aspirant to paddling pretensions, is, to put himself under the tuition of some good professional paddler, like Buckel or Franklin, during the *summer* months, when the water is warm, and his tutor more at his leisure, and to be had cheaper. Then, by the autumn, instead of having his business yet to learn, and frightening away the birds by awkward movements of his hands, or by carrying his head too high, he will have become a proficient in the use of oars and paddles, and have acquired a knowledge—and a *most important* one it is—of the *tides* and *channels!* In short, he will have become quite *au fait* at the business; going up to his birds like an old hand, and prostrating them to a *dead* certainty! Doubtless he will find this sort of shooting somewhat sulky and solitary, but it has its own peculiar joys "for a' that;" for, at night, albeit the scene be one where desolation reigns supreme, yet to the contemplative there is ample scope for reflection. 'Tis here—an isolated being, recumbent in his solitary bark—the gunner feels the truth and the beauty of the poet's sentiments—

> "There is a rapture on the lonely shore,
> There is society where none intrudes,
> By the deep sea and music in its roar,
> I love not man the less, but nature more."—Byron.

'Tis during this state of hushed stillness and of awful repose that the mind looks back upon itself, and dives into its own innermost recesses, interrupted only, it may be, by the air-piercing whistle of the curlew, "the shrill and somewhat melancholy sound of the wild duck's pinion," "the mournful note of the plover," or the raucous and harshly discordant voice of the heron. And say not, reader, the gunner's night is wholly cheerless and hath no charms for him; for what—oh! what—so softly beautiful—what so hallowing—as the tremulous moonbeam on the sleepless sea?*

> ———— "Thou also mad'st *the night*,
> Maker omnipotent! and thou the day."—MILTON.

In open weather ducks always feed in-shore, as far as the margin of the samphire beds, but, in frosty weather, feed close along the water's edge, as the mud does not freeze there.

But, reader, stay your breath—pause—they're yonder! I'm quite certain I heard them. Wait a moment, they will "open" again, and *you* will hear them also. Most unquestionably there is "a cannie bunch o' teal" with a stray widgeon or two among them. You will clearly distinguish the loud raucous† voice of the hen, and the whistle of the cock widgeon, from the queer jargon of the bustling teal, ever noisy after supper.

Reader, dost hear *now?* — deaf indeed must you be, if you do not, for there the whole "company" are "all in a charm." And now for the final approach! Be *still!* Move *slowly* and cautiously — *sensim*, as the Latins say — feeling your way, as it were, with your paddles, and keep canoe well fore and aft. Now you are within sixty or seventy yards, and the birds, judging from the sound, are well

* Appendix, No. 19. † Appendix, No. 20.

doubled up for a shot. Adjust the aim,* flinch not, and pull. Out with the grapnel, draw up your canoe until she grounds, and stamp the flukes into the mud. Pick up the dead and dying, and return *immediately*. I am extremely gratified to observe you have got three couple and a half of teal, and a couple of widgeon, besides a duck; no bad night's work either. Be quick, however, and off to port, for the breeze is springing up from the insidious north.† The birds and grapnel being now stowed away, and your boots mopped a little—up little white-wing sail—and away goes the homeward-veering skiff. You reach your sloop at anchor or on shore, and, after having properly secured your canoe, repair to your little cabin, and get some hot coffee, and, after that, your cigar or pipe of *bacco*, if *to to*bacco you be inclined. Possibly, for the first time in your life, you turn poet-aster, so delighted are you with your night's sport, so pleased with yourself, and so much in love with universal mankind.

Nor lowering clouds nor murky sky,
Nor freshening breeze can me defy,
For briskly over the waters blue
I onward speed in my light canoe;—
Pursue the swan's aërial flight,
Array'd in his robe of purest white,
Or mallard and teal as they gaily stand,
Preening their plumes on the yellow sand:
The lovely shell-duck with mottled breast,
The godwit in meeker liv'ry drest,
The golden plover, and wild goose grey,
The wary curlew—become my prey.

* If the water touch the birds, shoot at water level, or a little above it, at a fair distance; but if, when afloat, you fire at birds on the mud, shoot a foot higher. The best time to catch birds is at night when on the feed, and to shoot at them before the water touches them.

† A north wind frequently comes on very suddenly, and without any premonitory prognostics.

And whilst I watch by the moonbeam pale,
Or list the sound of the coming gale,
My bark rides high o'er the bounding wave,
Where the silver gull delights to lave;
Then briskly over the waters blue
I homeward speed in my light canoe!

SEAL-SHOOTING IN GENERAL, AND IN THE TEES BAY IN PARTICULAR.

Seals are now less plentiful in this Bay than they were formerly, which is partly attributable to the increase of the shipping, and partly to the decrease of the salmon, though, probably, more to the former than to the latter cause. In those days, a person at Stockton-on-Tees had an abominably cruel method of destroying them; namely, by fixing a *chevaux de frise* of barbed iron spikes on the sand at low water, upon which these poor animals speared themselves as they drove along with the incoming tide; and, by this means, I have been informed that as many as a dozen have been taken at once. During the years 1834 and 1835, few, I believe, kept a more vigilant eye on the said Bay than myself; and I do not think that the number of seals there, at that period, ever exceeded thirty. Occasionally, in bright weather, they all lie out together, basking on the sand, where they ogle each other, and appear to enjoy themselves very much, though their wanton wiles are far from being

"—— such as hang on Hebe's cheek:"

and I do not remember to have counted more than that num-

ber in a lot at any time; and of these the heaviest would, perhaps, not have exceeded sixteen stones in weight.

Naturalists inform us, that "the seal, when overtaken, defends itself vigorously with its feet and teeth, and can bear many wounds, but is killed with a blow on its nose." From this we may clearly gather, that a wounded seal, with tusks like a dog, and nails* on its feet—long, strong, and sharp—is not to be trifled with with impunity; or as he of the Western Wild Sports hath it — "*galopading* with an angry seal is anything but pleasure." But if it be ferocious when attacked, this animal is no less remarkable for its singular docility under contrary treatment—for its sagacity, quick-sightedness, and the flaming beauties of its eye. As to docility, "they may be trained and taught to obey a keeper like a dog; the one exhibited in London, in 1750, answered his keeper's call; would take food from the man's hand; crawl out of water, and, when ordered, stretch himself out at full length on the ground, and, when directed, would return to the water." The beautiful narrative, too, of "The Blind Seal," in the first volume of "Wild Sports of the West," is eminently corroborative of both the docility and the sagacity of this extraordinary animal. Indeed, from what is there related of "the gentle and affectionate seal," and from what has come under my own immediate eye, I am not without compunctions of conscience as to the rectitude of shooting a creature so sagacious, and, apparently, half-reasoning; nor without my doubts whether, in their case, killing can justly be considered no murder.

When a seal is wounded, he is either turned out of the herd like a stricken deer, or otherwise prefers lying out alone;

* These nails bear a pretty strong resemblance to the teeth of *Long's Patent Mane-puller*, which I may, perhaps, be excused from naming here, as it is a useful article in the stable.

and in further proof of the sagacity and also the acuteness of vision of these animals, I will relate a fact which occurred more than once in the Tees Bay. There was one large seal which used to lie out alone on the sand banks at the edge of the south channel, and which seemed to take no notice of ships, or cobles, passing almost within gunshot of him; but whenever a *canoe* appeared within half a mile, he instantly took the hint, scrambled into the water, dived, and was no longer visible on that day. In order the better to deceive him, we have lain down under cover of the sand bank before we reached the ninth buoy; but the moment the canoe doubled the point, that moment he was off! If this be not sagacity, call it reason: for it was quite evident that his scrutinizing eye could, at a momentary glance, and at a long distance, too, distinguish a canoe as the treacherous craft from which he had first received pepper, and, therefore (*vulneribus didicisset metum*), had learned fear from wounds.

Before he becomes acquainted with the hostile propensities of a canoe, a seal will, now and then, keep his round head above the surface for some time, gazing at you as he moves slowly along; and when he has "apparently satisfied his curiosity, sinks quietly from your view." If he be one of the large grey ones, the contrast of his flaring eyes with his hoary visage presents, as he stares intently upon you, a portrait somewhat grotesque and terrifically droll. His large, intensely-piercing eyes resemble, then, the most brilliant emeralds set in a bright rim of blood-red fire; and yet the sudden changes in their colour are alike striking and beautiful. This peculiar property in the eye of the seal and of the hyæna was long ago noticed by Pliny, who says—"Vituli marini, et hyenæ (*sc.* oculi) in mille colores transeunt subinde:"—the eyes of the seal and of the hyæna are frequently changed into a thousand colours.

I must not, however, forget that I am professing now to write upon seal-*shooting*. To the point, then. Where you can get a steady shot—as from the land, the beach, or rocks—at seals basking, nothing then answers better than a rifle; but on the water, you would be unable, from the motion of the boat, to take a sufficiently correct aim for ball-shooting. A stanchion-gun is far the best for a shot on the water, because any large shot (though 3 A is probably the best) in Eley's cartridge will penetrate the scull of a seal at seventy or eighty yards' distance; though I would not recommend firing beyond this, because, if wounded, the seal will, in all probability, have sunk before you can row up to him, especially in a strong tide-way, where they are the most frequently found; and though those which sink to the bottom are afterwards often cast on shore dead, yet this seldom occurs before they are in a state to render them by no means odoriferous, to say nothing of the injury they may otherwise sustain.

If there be not more than two or three seals together on a sand side, and, after having approached well within shot, you can get the heads of two of them pretty nearly in a line, or one of them clear of the other two, you may, perhaps, secure what you shoot at; at the same time, it must not be forgotten that shot always spoils the skin. But where there are a number of them together, to shoot at random into the whole group, with either shot or balls, is folly and cruelty in its height; because you will be certain to wound the greater part of them, without, perhaps, being able to lay hold of a single one. When, therefore, there are more than two or three together, the best plan is to approach them with the usual caution, until they take the water; immediately upon which, up jumps the skipper to his seat on the ammunition-box, and sculls to the place where the seals were, as they will keep lingering about it for a short time, popping up their heads as if looking for

each other, and being just then altogether less wary than usual. *This* is the best time of all others for a shot. It is *not* murder; it is blubber and clothing!

Whenever a single seal rises near to you, take the first chance you have of firing, as you may not have a second, and following him will not answer once in fifty times, for he soon finds out what you are after; and the next time you see him come up, if he ever shew his head again, he will, perhaps, be half a mile off, and it may be, too, in a totally different direction. Don't wait for the man bringing the canoe exactly end on to him, but get you the gun to bear fair, or thereabouts, as soon as you can, making allowance in your aim for the motion of the craft, and *pull quick*.

I have fired at seals whose heads I am fully persuaded must have been pretty well filled with shot, and which, therefore, I should imagine, would be killed outright, but which never rose to the surface. And yet that seals mortally wounded sink instantly, as some imagine, is certainly not always the case. I once shot at one on the sand near the seventh buoy in the Tees; he instantly made all haste into the water, and totally disappeared for about half a minute, when he emerged again about thirty yards off, gasping for breath; we instantly rowed up to him, when he shewed symptoms of exhaustion, and began to flounder about on the surface; then Robin Hood seized him by the fin, and I by the tail, and thus we dragged him in, aft* of the canoe, in all but a lifeless state; when, after one or two heavy sobs, the poor animal died. He weighed nine stones, and when skinned and divested of blubber was opened. There was a vast quantity of black coloured coagulated blood in the cavity of the

* It would not be safe to drag a heavy seal over the side of a canoe, especially in a tide-way; the best plan is to take him in tow.

chest, and no less than seven pellets of S. S.G. were found lodged within him, most of them in or about vital parts.

On another occasion, and near to the same spot, I shot at the head of a large seal in the water, at about eighty or ninety yards distance; he immediately began to plunge, and as he rolled about, part of his body would occasionally appear above the surface, and in this state it was that we reached him, but before we could get hold of him, had the mortification to see him slowly but gradually sinking lower and lower in the transparent azure, until his really beautiful leopard-like skin disappeared altogether! The sea was dyed with blood, in a large circle, which was carried down by the tide, and the potent oleaginous effluvium arising from it, perfumed the air with a fragrance very different from that of otto of roses, or of

"Thine inimitable oil—Macassar!"

Had we just then had a landing-hook, or a barbed spear, this seal had been our own, and full sixteen stones, "I guess," he would have weighed.

The conclusions at which I arrived, from my limited experience in seal-shooting, were—

1st. That a seal killed outright in the water always sinks soon, if he be a *large* one (for I have known *small* ones, when quite dead, float on the surface), because the moment the shot strikes him he instinctively shrinks under water, and when once his head is below the surface he sinks to the bottom, if not by his own weight, yet as he gradually fills with water.

And, 2nd, that if hit in the brain, without being killed instantly, he will strive, like man in trouble, to keep his head above water as long as he can; and that with quickness you may get a canoe up to him in time to secure him "by hook

or by crook," and if you lose him, he dies at once, and there is one salmon-killer the less.

When mortally wounded, I am disposed to think that a seal would never remain long under water if he *could* get his head above it, but that it will depend upon what part of the body he is hit in, whether he will be able to accomplish this or not.

I am not aware that the seals are ever seen on the eastern coast, except as a rarity, south of Lynn and Boston Deeps, where they are pretty numerous, though not easy of access, on account of their lying out so far from land. Some of these are much larger than any I ever saw or heard of in the Tees. The late John Moulton, the Boston gunner, told me that "he had shot one which yielded nine gallons of oil, and which he supposed might weigh forty stones. The skin and blubber were sold for five pounds." He spoke of what he called "*flinching*"—flenching is, I believe, the more correct—a Greenland term, which means taking the blubber and the skin only, and leaving the scrag and flesh, an operation he himself always performed on shooting a seal, "to lighten the cargo in his boat."

And now, reader, what amends can I make thee for this brief essay on seal-shooting? Shall I tail it out with a tale of a tailor? I will.

"Trahit! sua quemque voluptas!"

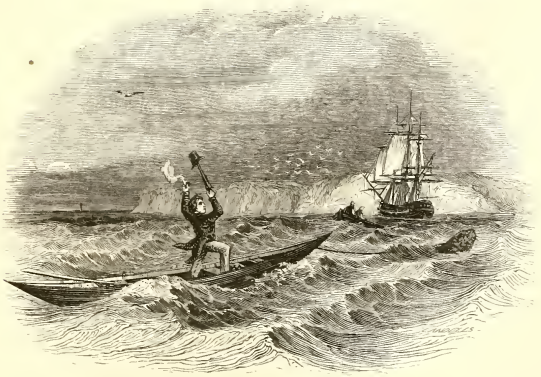
Already I have spoken of the superior size of the seals in Lynn Deeps; but once on a day, and that none so "lang syne," appeared there a huge seal of vast dimensions—a monster of those deeps; and, as with the Thames trout of gigantic size, every one was anxious to become the fortunate captor of so estimable a prize. The best of the gunners had again and again exhausted the best of their skill, in order to bring him home in triumph, but all to no purpose. It did so happen,

however, that a certain individual of Lynn, Benjamin Salmon by name, a tailor by trade, having, one night, eaten largely of fat pork for supper, and having gone to sleep on his back, as tailors always do, dreamed that he alone was to become the captor of "Shawn a tra buoy."* Accordingly, in the morning, big with the project, and fully persuaded of the certainty of success, without mentioning particulars to any living soul, he hired him canoe and gun, fully determined to unbend his mind and his legs by the use of his arms. No one ever plied the oar more vigorously than did this man of buckram. It may be, that what is denied to the whole, is sometimes granted to the fractional part of humanity; but, in this case, the order of nature was for once reversed—for, instead of the seal killing salmon, Salmon killed the seal!—nor was ever Big Ben *so* big as was Ben Salmon on this colossal occasion. His aim was most correct—for a tailor, miraculous; for not only did he "hit him in the eye," but he absolutely shot one eye out. A seal, however, of forty stones weight, is not very easily conveyed seven or eight miles to port; particularly when a man has no better means of transportation than a gun-boat, which has enough to do to carry himself. The tailor, however, was too much flushed with conquest to be dismayed by trifles, and, therefore, took the painter† and made a running noose over the seal's neck; and just then it was that, stepping into the boat, he declared *this* to be "the proudest moment of his life!" For some time he had his fat friend in tow, and, fresh nerved by success, made pretty good way; till, at length, the animal, which had been only severely stunned by the wound, began to feel the reviving influences of his native element, and, to be brief, turned the tables so com-

* Jack of the yellow strand. See "Wild Sports of the West." Vol. i. p. 59.

† The painters of the Lynn gun-boats pass through a hole in the bottom of the stern-post.

pletely upon his exulting antagonist, that, after a fine run of two miles, the knight of the thimble found himself going right out into the open sea!—the whole affair exciting a degree of profound astonishment in his mind, equalled only by certain tremulous emotions, and very queer sensations, which he now experienced for the first time in his life. Had *Snip* gone forward to have reached his unloaded gun, or to have cut the painter, the boat would have been drawn under water, unless he had instantly jumped on the seal's back—and no Waterton, no cayman-rider he! *He* was but *a tailor!* His only hope of safety, therefore, was in being able to attract the notice of some one on board a ship, then lying at anchor a distance off, in order that a boat might be sent to his rescue; and in this he, at length, most fortunately succeeded. The seal was now fairly captured, but was claimed by the ship's company; indeed, Salmon declared that "he had had quite enough to deter him from a second attempt at



seal-towing; that never since his name was *Salmon* had he been in such a precious *pickle;* and that if ever he reached *terra firma* again, the devil might eat fat pork and turn seal-shooter for him!"

WILD SWAN SHOOTING.

"The cygnet nobly walks the water;
So moved on earth Circassia's daughter,
The loveliest bird of Franguestan!
As rears her crest the ruffled swan."—Byron.

Formerly, the Tees Bay was noted for these birds; and during the very severe weather which then was fashionable, I have been credibly assured that a common invitation among the country yokels, when they had nothing better to do, was —"Now, lads, let's go hunt the swans;" and that by eternally chasing and circumventing them, a flock of fourteen were, one by one, ultimately butchered with shoulder-guns. Small as the place is, and swarming as it does—or, at all events, did, when I was there—with shooters, no less than eighteen swans were shot in that Bay during the severe winter of 1838, besides others in the rivers of the adjacent country. For example: on the 29th January, 1838, Thomas Kay, gamekeeper to Mrs. Coure, of Scruton, near Bedale, shot two wild swans upon the river Swale, at thirty-eight yards distance, with a common fowling-piece and No. 4 shot; and during the ensuing month of the same year, on the same river—and

which, by the way, is one of the best duck rivers in England, and by no means destitute of pike—Mr. William Atkinson, of Sandhutton, shot a wild swan, measuring, in length, five feet two inches, and in width, eight feet nine inches, and weighing twenty-one pounds. And on the 7th of February, in the same year, Mr. Robert Hesleton, of Kilnsey, near Skipton, shot two wild swans, right and left, on the river Wharf, with a seven-pound double gun, loaded with No. 3 shot. About the same time, William Sharpe, gamekeeper to R. T. North, Esq., of Thurlam Castle, shot, near the river Lune, a swan weighing no less than twenty-three pounds. On this occasion, there were two swans which took wing simultaneouly, one falling to each barrel:—*Sharpe* shooting! The other swan weighed seventeen pounds—the two forming a pretty fair bag of themselves. It is not a matter of every day occurrence to kill, at one rising, a brace of birds averaging twenty pounds each in weight.

During very severe weather, swans are, occasionally, not only easy of access, but fly extremely low, and seldom deviate from a direct course. There is scarcely a country fellow in the neighbourhood of the Tees Bay who has not a tale to tell you about his swan-shooting; and some of them have shot swans who have scarcely shot any other bird. Indeed, what with his large body and long neck, when tamed down by the pinching rigours* of a long frost, with the usual accompaniment —heavy falls of snow, he sometimes presents a sort of barn-door target, which, at any moderate distance, a shooter must be possessed of some ingenuity to contrive to miss. From the "Sporting Magazine" we learn that, "in the winter of 1803, seventeen wild swans were shot by one man in the course of one week, in the neighbourhood of Yarmouth, in Norfolk. In that of 1815, seven were killed out of eleven, at

* Appendix, No. 21.

Dungeness, at a single shot; and about the same time, in the neighbourhood of Rye, the same number were brought down at a single shot." We may presume that stanchion-guns were used in the above instances; though that does not necessarily appear from the accounts given. A wild swan, however, is, at all times, a noble and a valuable prize, be he who he may that kills it. In severe weather they very often sit among the little icebergs, where you cannot approach them, or upon sand-banks equally inaccessible. The best time to catch them is at grey of morn. Buckel informed me that, on one occasion, he killed eleven wild swans in one night.

Although twenty in number is, I believe, usually considered a large flock of swans, yet the elder Hornigold assured me that, at Lynn, he had seen "ninety of a head;" *i. e.*, in a flock: and some twenty years ago, an immense number of these birds congregated on Hornsea Mere,* where they employed their leisure in teaching the tame swans—which then were numerous there—how to fly. This they accomplished by rising from the water at intervals, and thus luring the tame ones to join them, taking them short excursions, at first, and increasing the distance daily, but always returning to the Mere. At length, after a good preparatory training, they decoyed these domestic novices away altogether—which being unwieldy, and unaccustomed to long flights, were soon tired with going the pace; when dropping into the river Hull, and other parts of the country, they were speedily shot. Not, however, without leaving behind them some useful moral lessons to mankind; some apt similes for young gentlemen's "themes at school;" some pathetic monitory hints to young ladies; such as—

> "Learn hence, ye *fair* ones undeceiv'd,
> That *one* false step is ne'er retriev'd;"

* Appendix, No. 22.

and some sage reflections on the folly and danger of ambition; which, along with all further remarks on this subject, I cheerfully resign to those capable of longer and loftier flights than the tame swans of the owner of Hornsea Mere—or the still tamer imagination of the humble author of these reminiscences.

SHOULDER DUCK-GUNS.

Before the vast superiority of even the smallest stanchion-gun over the largest shoulder duck-gun, or the equally great superiority of the patent cartridge over loose shot, had become familiar to me, no man living was a greater advocate than I was for a large single shoulder duck-gun. Alas! how often have these legs borne me up to the knees in mud, over the interminable oozes on the coast, groaning under fifteen or sixteen pounds (to say nothing of ammunition, &c.) of lumberly metal and wood—for such is the view I now take of these ugly, cumbersome, and comparatively useless guns. "Have plenty of metal at the breech, sir, a good long barrel, and a rattling big gun," was the advice of old George Wallis of Hull, who made duck-guns for me thirty years ago—and I took his advice.

But, just set any man to walk for five or six hours on the mud, with one of these guns on his shoulder, and I warrant him, it shall task his metal, though he be "steel to the back bone."

Very heavy shoulder duck-guns, in my opinion, are the least useful of all guns—for what you gain in weight, you lose in freedom of action; besides the wind takes considerable effect on long barrels, to say nothing of their being oppressive and

cumbersome to carry, or of their report being stingingly deafening to the ear, beyond that of any other kind of gun.

Exceptions to the rule, I deny it not, there may be:—to wit, Captains Barclay or Maclean—

"Big-boned men framed of the Cyclops size,"

to whom half a stone may make no difference; but, taking the ordinary run of mortals, I feel confident that nineteen shooters in twenty will, sooner or later, become wearied out—if not to the very heart's core disgusted with carrying very heavy guns.

In my opinion, ten or eleven pounds weight, is the maximum for any shoulder-gun whatever, that is to be borne for the day by the shooter; nor would I ever exceed a nine gauge.

To such sportsmen, however, as are able to wield, or as are fond of *very* heavy doubles, I can strongly recommend the proportions of the following double, made for me by Purdey.

	lb.	oz.
Weight of barrels	9	11
Ditto stocks and lock	5	0 ½
Ramrod	0	6 ½
	15	2

	ft.	in.
Gauge—8 full		
Length of barrels	3	3

This is as admirable a shooting-gun as was ever bored; with it I killed, in open weather, eighteen widgeon at two shots, without taking it from my shoulder, and with it, too, have brought down duck and widgeon, flying by moonlight, from such heights as no other gun I ever possessed could bring them. With it grouse, I found, were never safe, and, in other hands, its performances have astonished the shooter. It has been handled and examined by many first rate sportsmen, and some experienced keepers, who have been unanimous in extolling its proportions, and in deeming it heavy enough. I therefore

speak with the utmost confidence respecting it, considering it, as I do, the *ne plus ultra* for very heavy shoulder doubles. If, therefore, the sportsman object not to weight, he cannot have a more suitable bore, or a better proportioned gun, than the above.

Nevertheless, Eley's cartridges being always used, and containing shot of a proper size, I repeat, it is my opinion that, take one time with another, nineteen shooters in twenty will kill more wild fowl with guns from eight and a quarter to ten pounds weight (according as they can wield them), and with tenfold more ease to themselves, than with any others, either by night or by day. But unless you go to, at the least, eight pounds and a half weight, in my opinion you had far better shoot with a single than with a double; because, without weight, you cannot have a large bore, and without *that*, Eley's cartridges are comparatively of but little avail in wild fowl shooting. But a nine or a ten pound double admits of an effective charge of *large* shot in one barrel, and of *very* large shot in the other.

GENERAL REMARKS ON SHOULDER DUCK-GUNS.

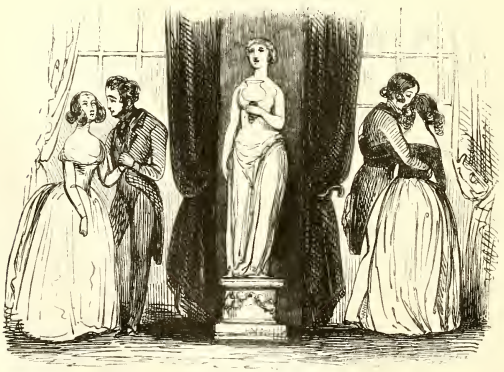
The neatest and best form of barrel for *all* single guns is what is called "a Nock's form" barrel, or one which is flat both at the sides and top of the breech, instead of being circular, like the rest of the barrel.*

Let your duck-gun stocks be made of good, well-seasoned, walnut wood, the less veined the better, for figure is no object here; and, as I have before observed, the plainest are generally the strongest stocks, and are, therefore, the best adapted

* You cannot well keep a *round* barrel in a vice, and no clams will hold properly to turn the breech out. A single barrel, especially a large one, should always be "Nock's form." Moreover, a round barrel does not make near so good a finish in workmanship.

for rough work. The stock should have a pistol grip, and should also be chequered underneath between the bolt and the trigger-guard for better carriage. The furniture should not be of the usual blued steel, but of brass or German silver, to obviate rust. You can either have the stock painted white, stained black, or varnished. For my own part, I prefer the usual varnished stocks, rubbed over, occasionally, with an oiled flannel, as the spray runs or rubs off them the quickest, and I never found them give way under this management.

If at any time during the season, you are in urgent want of a duck-gun, instruct the maker to despatch it to you in a deal case, in the rough, without any regular browning, blueing, scroll engraving, &c., by which you will save a fortnight or three weeks, and the gun is just as good for *use*, only it requires a little more care to prevent rust, and you can return it to him to finish off and polish when the buds of the trees are beginning to expand into leaf, and when THE DUCKS have—



"PAIRED OFF."

For this sort of gun I prefer pipes well brased on, of much larger diameter than usual, to admit a stout ramrod for cartridges, with a stopper at the muzzle, to prevent the rod protruding or flying forwards after each discharge.

Duck-guns should always have the advantage of the very best wadding, such as punched felt of the closest texture and best quality, or cork covered with calico, and greased at the edges, over the powder, and one of Purdey's prepared waddings, or those of a similar kind, over the shot.

DUCK-SHOT FOR SHOULDER-GUNS.

Although every snipe-shooter has occasionally killed wild ducks springing out of a brook, with Nos. 7 or 8 shot, yet no gun professedly loaded for duck-shooting ought to have shot upon the powder of a less size than No. 3.

The arguments in favour of using small shot in preference to large for killing ducks and other large coast birds, with a shoulder-gun, though often gravely adduced, are all too futile to need notice, much less any formal refutation.

FLIGHT-SHOOTING.

"Agedum pauca accipe contra."—Hor.

This, like stanchion-gun shooting, is a description of diversion, at the very idea of which tiger-looking, smoke-dried dandies, and ringleted, wasp-waisted exquisites, faint, and

which, it is to be lamented, some of the more squeamishly refined of even a really good class of sportsmen, deem *infra dig.* Why this prejudice should exist, I never yet could clearly understand. The coast-shooter occasionally gets a little soft mud on his boots, not often so high, and seldom higher than the calf of his leg, mops it off in two minutes, before he gets into the canoe again, or when he reaches his shooting-box, and is then, though roughly clad, as clean and dry as he was when he started. But view "one of the right sort," coming home —a distance of fourteen miles only by the milestones— "after having just done the thing," himself pretty well fagged, and without any outer covering for the scarlet; his horse fairly done up, and walking at the rate of four miles an hour, in a drenching shower of rain, his hat, perhaps, broken from its moorings, his breeches' knees torn, and his gallant person regularly bespattered with, *horresco referens*—MUD! from top to toe. Well, he is the "admired of all admirers," and far be it from me to presume to assert, or to think, that he is not a fit subject for admiration. I only wish he was a little more comfortable. But what becomes of the poor coast-shooter, sitting, meanwhile, quite at his ease, and "all right" in his canoe, or box? Why he, on the contrary, is the upbraided of all upbraiders—a *scavenger!* But if a Prince happen to like tobacco as well as a cobbler, why should His Royal Highness deny himself the luxury of a pipe? At all events, my plebeian taste has led me to follow this sport, more or less, for the last thirty-five years, which, in my estimation, ranks high as one of the most excitingly interesting, at the same time often most difficult branches of shooting. But, as it is not every shooter who has so much as even heard of flight-shooting, I will proceed to describe it.

Throughout the winter, wild ducks, widgeon, and teal usually sit during the day—their season of repose—huddled

together in large flocks, either under the lee of rocks at sea, as at Redcar;* in the centre of some lake inaccessible to the sportsman; or on private ornamental pieces of fresh water; but about the dusk of evening they keep rising at intervals, in small "companies" or "trips," not often exceeding seven or eight in number, and very frequently by two or three at a time only, and *fly* off to their feeding-ground; and this is provincially and emphatically called *flight* or *flying-time*, as shooting at them at this season is called *flight-shooting*.

As, however, there are two or three kinds of flight-shooting, and as these differ a good deal from each other, I shall here attempt to describe and to give instructions for all. And first of—

FLIGHT-SHOOTING INLAND.

Those birds which have selected the lakes, &c., in the interior, as their constant daily resort, feed, for the most part —during open weather at least—in the cars, fens, marshes, swamps on commons, stells, standing plashes in stubbles, particularly wheat stubbles, and such places. When the young sportsman is beating for snipes in these swampy parts, he may frequently observe tracks through the grass, and aquatic herbs growing in the shallows, and on the surface of the deeper water. These are places where the ducks have been wading, or swimming, during the night, and where, now and then, in sequestered spots, they will remain in the day time also. Perhaps, too, here and there, a few feathers will be discernible; —ten to one, ducks use the place at night. If, therefore, he be desirous of a shot or two at flight time, let him reconnoitre

* From the middle of November to the middle of January, during an open winter, any person putting off in a coble from Redcar or Coatham, a mile or two from shore, would probably, any day, see from 2000 to 3000 head of wild fowl, nearly all duck and widgeon.

the place well during the day, and determine upon the best stations. For, as he should always endeavour to *face* the *light*, his station must be varied accordingly. He will, of course, pitch upon the dryest spots—say fifteen or twenty yards from the water—the place will afford, and arriving there pretty early in the evening, if he have brought no bag of straw nor unipod* along with him to sit upon, let him collect some dry grass, and kneel with the right knee upon it, rising gently upright, now and then, to prevent being cramped by remaining long in that posture.

Soon after dusk, he will, in general, hear or see the birds, if they intend coming at all, and now let him crouch low, and remain perfectly still. If the ducks have been long accustomed to the spot, they will perhaps come directly, and fearlessly drop, full splash, into the water, the moment they reach it, in which case the best plan, perhaps, is to shoot at them the instant they alight—and be ready to catch them as they arise with the second barrel. Most commonly, however, the birds wheel round you, at first, in a wide, wary, circle (recollect, my young friends, these are moments of tremulous interest) succeeded by a second revolution within reasonable distance; this is the auspicious moment—embrace it—and aim so as to kill as many as you can. I have often knocked over the duck and mallard at a shot when there have been but a couple; and a very satisfactory sort of shot it is—worth a whole bagful of partridges.

It may not be amiss to add, that the size of a place is not always to be looked at. Wild ducks, and a good many, too, will sometimes come to feed in very small, swampy spots, which can scarcely be called anything else but duck-holes. I have one or two favourite places of this description in my eye at this

* A stool with but one leg, fixed in the centre, and pointed with iron at the bottom, to thrust into the soft ground, mud, or sand.

moment, where I have shot wild ducks again and again. How often, too, do ducks feed nightly in ponds within a short distance only of the residence of many an ardent MODERN SHOOTER, who tells you, he "would give *anything* for a shot at *ducks* now and then; but we have none in our country."

Where, however, circumstances admit, I should recommend the flight-shooter, in all cases, to employ a shooting-box, sunk nearly level with the ground, similar to the one described at p. 491. I need hardly add, that long water-boots, two pairs of worsted stockings, flannel drawers and waistcoat, warm clothing, and a flannel gunning or other cap, are equally essential here as in

FLIGHT-SHOOTING ON THE COAST.

Whilst many flocks of the right sort of wild fowl, as I have just stated, select fresh water in the interior as their constant resort, there are others which appear to despise these sequestered scenes of repose, preferring to rest all day long on the bosom of the ocean—though tossed, at times, on the most tempestuous billows—to approaching the faithless dwellings of man. Whether the former have been, for the most part, "homebreds," and, in consequence, have made nearer approaches to domestication—while the latter, sprung from the dreary and inaccessible morasses of Hyperborean regions, where no print of human footstep was ever traced—no sound of human voice was ever heard—participate in the wildness of their origin, is not for me to determine, although I have often thought that this may be the case, and the more so as these sea ducks are generally larger and somewhat lighter coloured than those of the interior. Be this as it may, they feed chiefly upon the long salt grasses that grow on the oozes—the stem and deeply penetrating roots of which are

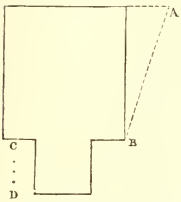
highly saccharine and fattening—and at dusk of eve they rise from ocean and take flight.

Now, here it just depends whether our flight-shooter be desirous to do the thing to the best purpose, and with "an enthusiast heat," or whether he will content himself with taking it coolly and quietly. If the latter, I would strenuously recommend him not to go upon the mud; for even with the aid of mud pattens, nothing can be more abominable than standing out upon this tremulous stuff; your feet keep sinking in, and you have scarcely any command of yourself in shooting, being unable to turn on your centre. Besides, if standing on the dark and least wet mud (as you always ought to do, to prevent "coming events casting their shadows before"), the birds will see you during all the *early*—frequently the best part of the flight-shooting; and if the wind be strong, and the weather cold, you will be far from comfortable; to say nothing of the difficulty of loading your gun without besmearing the stock with mud. *Experto crede!* In short, this *is* making a toil of a pleasure with a vengeance; and, what is still worse, to little or no good purpose in the end. Sooner than expose his worthy person to these indignities, my counsel to the shooter is, to stand or sit upon a stool on the sand, or, better still, to sink a box in some part of the enclosed lands over which the ducks are known to fly in their way to the feeding ground. They will, in general, though not always, come in high, as they seldom lower their flight much until they have flown some distance over the mud; but a strong gun, with B or A shot, in Eley's cartridge, will frequently fetch them down.

If, on the contrary, our *flighter* be a regular out-and-outer —a determined enthusiast, who will have his shots and his birds at any rate—well, then, my friend, thou art one of my own sort. Prithee draw thy chair near to me whilst I impart

to thee a few little secrets which I know thou wilt value beyond the price of this my enlightening tome, nor overrate them either.

Behold ye, then, the section of "a dress(ing) box." The



box to be from two feet ten inches, to three feet square at the top, of inch or inch and a quarter deal, undressed and well tarred without, and planed once over within. One side of it—*viz.*, that on which the shooter usually sits—may be bevelled, or flammed out (A . . . B); but, if bevelled on all sides, the cavity would be too much exposed to the bird's-eye view. The height of the sides of the large, or upper box, ought to be regulated by the sitting height of the shooter; whilst that of the sides of the lower one (C . . . D) should be regulated by the height from the under part of his knee to the sole of his foot. Chip, the carpenter, had best "take *measures* accordingly."

Should the mud be soft and springy, it is then best to sink a charred old oak post on one or two sides of the box, to prevent it being washed out and floated away.

Digging holes in the sand, or mud, and burying *casks* of all sorts, are "dead slow" *tub*ish practices, coeval with the invasion by Julius Cæsar, and may answer well enough in their way; but the boxes* I here recommend are infinitely superior in all respects to every kind of tub.

1st. They are far more roomy, and yet from their narrow construction, and particularly at bottom, hold less water, and

* As watch-boxes for poachers, golden plover, hares, rabbits, ravens, vermin, or fowl of any kind, in any situation, on land or coast mud, park and gamekeepers would find them useful. A strong cover at the top would exclude the wet and prevent cattle from falling in. This cover may be concealed by means of sods, whins, thorns, &c.

are, therefore, sooner emptied, as well as being of a more suitable shape for that purpose.

2nd. They give the shooter a far greater command over both his gun and the birds, and are much easier and pleasanter to shoot from and to load in.

3rd. They allow of good seats on all sides.

4th. They are far easier to get in and out of than any tub.

5th. From their formation they are the less liable to be washed up by the tide—a very common case with a puncheon.

Each of these advantages—and more might easily be enumerated—would decide the preference of box to tub; but the whole, when united, render all attempts at comparison perfectly absurd.

The Greatham flight-shooters are, for the most part, what the greyhound men call "rare good stickers," for they will sit in these boxes till the icicles hang down from the hairs of their head, so long as there remains but the *hope* even of a good shot to be made! Indeed, so keen are the generality of them, and such good "*box-keepers*," that there is an end of all canoe-shooting by night on their side the Bay. They sink these boxes in the heart of the very best feeding ground, and there sit sometimes till night, and sometimes all night long, shooting the birds, both on the wing and when they have pitched, perhaps, close besides them. On the opposite, or Yorkshire side the Bay, though the distance across does not exceed four or five miles, the flight-shooters are a century behind the Greatham men. York musters pretty early and pretty strong every evening, from Coatham and the neighbourhood, but contents himself by scraping a sort of aboriginal ostrich-hole in the sand, wherein he cowers as low as he can. Perhaps he brings along with him a wisp of straw to protect him from the

damp, or—as he himself says—"te mack mee set a bit moor cumfurtubler like." *Anglice*, "to make me sit a bit more comfortable like." As soon as the regular flight is over, which, on "good seeing nights," lasts, perhaps, for an hour—York begins to feel the want of his supper, and so trudges off home again like a good fellow. This gives the birds an opportunity to pitch and feed in quiet, whilst the Greathamites and Gothamites meanwhile, on the opposite coast, are "blazing away at 'em" for hours after! The consequence is, that the Yorkshire side — though far the most extensive in point of territory—yet the worst feeding ground around the Bay, affords by far the best regular flight-shooting, especially for the ducks, which are shyer, more cunning, and far more easily banished from a haunt, than the widgeon; for, if ducks be constantly shot at, *they* will not come to the feeding-ground till long after the regular flight time, especially on moonlight nights. This I know from having often met them coming full quack across the country as I have been returning from flight-shooting, at a very late hour.

All the way up the Tees from Coatham sands to within a mile of Stockton, the *flighters* take their evening *stands;* for, by habit, the old "*hand* gunners," have got to know the "*lines*" which the birds usually take. Previous to the building of the new port of Middlesborough, that site and its vicinity used to afford famous flight-shooting, and I have heard of great performances in those days. But now there are twenty shooters for one; and now 100 vessels, and seven or eight great buzzing steam-tugs, navigate the Tees every week, where a single sail was then considered something extraordinary. The miracle is, that there should be a bird left. From all I have heard, no doubt the Tees Bay was, for its size, one of the very best places in all England for wild fowl.

But to return from my wanderings. Let me not be misunderstood—I commend my box to the flight-shooter, because I feel well assured he will make fair use of it. In some situations nothing can be done without it, and sure I am —in all—it is beyond comparison infinitely the best. A few remarks as to the position of it, &c., will not be superfluous.

In sinking your box in the mud, provided no surrounding creeks interfere—for beware of them—perhaps midway* betwixt high and low water mark may not be a bad situation. You must, of course, take care to be off to shore in time not to be overtaken by a quick flood tide. Always come early to flight, being careful not to heat yourself in riding or walking. You must either employ some person to bale the water out of the box, or do it yourself, which may be effected with ease in ten minutes. You should also have a forked stake driven into the mud within a few inches of the surface, to rest your gun-muzzle upon during the process of baleing. The water is cast out by means of a pail (one hardly worth stealing is the best), chained to one corner of the box, and leaded at the bottom, to prevent its being raised by the tide, and thus being exposed to view at low water. As this, however, admits of others using the box when you are not there, some take a tin pail with them whenever they go, and never leave it behind; but in a private station it is a great convenience to have it a fixture. It is a good plan to fix your box upon rather rising ground, as this will allow of your cutting a shallow little channel, or meander-

* It is often useful to have two boxes—one near shore, and the other farther out, to accommodate the receding tide; your man emptying the latter the moment the tide has fairly left it exposed, whilst you are shooting in the former; and when he has done this you change your quarters. The "Flighter's Rules" require that each box shall be a long gun-shot, at least, from any other; obviously a judicious regulation.

ing Nile in miniature, to convey the water away as you bale it out, and which, moreover, presents rather an attraction to the birds. When all the water is cleared out, the shooter may step in; and placing his cartridge-box on a piece of thin deal board—which he should bring along with him for the purpose —on the seat, to avoid damp, he sits him down—full of hope and patience, both his great auxiliaries—facing that quarter whence the birds are expected to come in. In looking out, he directs his eyes neither too high nor too low—say about forty yards high, at forty yards distance; and as in the act of listening the mouth opens a little, he is careful not to expand it beyond reasonable bounds. If he bring a yarn mop with him, so much the better, as by its occasional use, and by giving it a few wringing twirls over the side of the box, he may keep the place quite dry; though with good boots, previously well doctored with salve, I never experienced any material inconvenience when a mop was not used; and if the weather be piercingly cold, or the wind high, these boxes are warm, so much so that, whilst a person standing out on the mud would sometimes be chilled beyond all power of shooting, "Jack in the box" would be really comfortable. Were this not the fact, the flighters never could sit in these boxes with impunity for so many hours in succession, as they frequently do during the bitterest blasts of winter, and as, indeed, I have often done, by way of bagging wild fowl for myself, and hints for the The Modern Shooter.

When a bird falls, your best plan is to fetch him as quickly as you can, unless he be shot dead, as you will easily ascertain by his grounding with a dull and leaden fall, in which case, if no stray dog be about, he may remain on his back until you have served another or two in the same way. There are worse plans than having a man walking about on the shore with a retriever in a chain, which he can unloose at your call;

for dogs are a greater nuisance in a box than in a canoe; and it is almost cruelty to make them crouch on the wet mud outside for any great length of time.

These boxes are famous things during the daytime in severe cold; but, in an evening, birds may be shot from them in almost any weather, and very frequently when the attempt were vain to procure them in any other way, as I myself have experienced full many a time and oft.

I ought not to omit to mention, that the wild dreariness of the scene is sometimes enlivened by the presence of a gentleman which each flighter calls—"my tailor." This is simply a large branch of Scotch fir, or other tree, partly stripped of its branches, and dressed off in any fantastic form your exuberant fancy may suggest, and then stuck in the mud at some distance from your box, with the view of scaring or turning the birds towards you when in it; and, at times, this said tailor will be found almost as good as a man. The accompaniment of "a ninth," or journeyman, is likewise an addition highly eligible—a snip being placed at a reasonable distance on either side the shooter.

One word more on our box. Should any graver sportsman, who happily is enabled to say—"I'm not a single man," be induced to try it, I would only beg to caution him how he allows his sporting ardour to lead him to remain out too long, for fear of exciting painful apprehensions at home for his personal safety. The Poet of Venusium accuses the *hunters* of his day of this neglect; and I am unwilling that any such ungallant reproach should attach to modern *shooters* as "Venator's"—

> "Manet sub Jove frigido,
> Teneræ conjugis immemor."—Hor.
> "The sportsman, chill'd by midnight Jove,*
> Forgets his tender wedded love."

* In the language of poetry among the Greeks and Romans, Jupiter, as *here*, often signifies the *air*.

FLIGHT-SHOOTING ON THE COAST.

THE MORNING FLIGHT.

I have hitherto written of the evening flight only, as well inland as on the coast; but there is, also, the *morning* flight. This, however, I apprehend, but few sportsmen will be anxious to attend; as early rising, on a cold winter's morning, does not altogether comport with every one's inclination.

When the ducks have fed, they collect together during the night, and, at the dawn of morning, return in a few large flocks to their respective daily resorts. The great object of the matutinal flight-shooter is to ascertain "the *lines*," or, in other words, the cross-country direction which the birds take on their return, and to conceal himself behind some hedge or bank, and wait their passing. At this time of morning, and being full fed, they usually fly low—often very low—just merely topping the hedges; and on this account, as well as their being in larger flocks, flying closer together, and being less wary, more are frequently killed at a shot, than at any other time, with a shoulder-gun.

The large pond at Wyndyard, the seat of the Marquis of Londonderry, is covered with duck, widgeon, and teal, during the winter; a great portion of which, though the distance is nine miles, feed every night on the salt feeding ground in the Tees Bay, and return at twilight in the morning. The Greathamites have got to know their lines of flight, which happen to be at no great distance from their own village; so that it is nothing uncommon for a flighter there to knock over a duck or two before breakfast, at no great distance from his own door.

GENERAL REMARKS ON FLIGHT-SHOOTING.

Like all other sports and sublunary pursuits, that of flight-shooting is subject to vicissitude and disappointment. The

state of the tides, the changes in the wind and weather, and other causes, have a sensible influence on the birds, which it would puzzle even an *Airy* or a *Whewell* to account for. One night the birds shall fly past you, trip after trip, presenting the fairest shots; the next, you shall hear hundreds in the air, but not one can you *see;* on a third night you shall sit for a couple of hours without seeing a bird, hearing a solitary *quack*, or, perhaps, the *whiz* of a single pinion!

To make amends, however, for these little drawbacks to the sport, there are many favourable nights during a season; and when there is sport, that sport is good. On one occasion, at the Tees Bay, with a ten-pound single gun, I bagged, in two shots, and in five minutes, two mallards and a duck, as two individuals still living could attest; and, ere now, I have bagged five head of a night; so that flight-shooting is not always a sport to be despised.

Those nights which present a mixture of dark and white clouds, with but little moonlight, are "the best seeing nights;" and, universally, the less frost there is in the atmosphere the better: no nights so bad for seeing as bright, starlight, frosty nights. On such occasions, the birds frequently fly well—perhaps at no time *so* well; but the keenest eye is unable to catch a glimpse of one, unless it be lowering to alight. You may, it is true, direct your aim by the sound of the wings, and thus shoot by the ear; but this is random work at best. I have, however, frequently brought them down in this way, and much may be acquired by practice. One of the greatest excellencies of the box in question, is that, when thus placed below the surface, you not only see, but hear much more correctly than when exposed above ground to the full whistling play of the wind upon your person and gun.

On moonlight nights the birds look smaller than they

really are; but, on a dull and dusky night, they look as large as life, and as black as coals; so that you may distinguish the mallards from the ducks by their superior size.

The more birds fly about during the day, the less they fly at night; and, generally speaking, they fly well on a change of weather, from good to bad, or the contrary. When much abused by being constantly shot at, they will alight on the water, not very far from the feeding ground, and remain there till it is too dark to shoot.

Fortunately, there is not always "a slem;" *i. e. d.*, there is no ooze bare at the proper flight time; in short, the variations in the tide reduce the sport to something like alternate weeks, or, as the men of Greatham say—"a week on and a week off." And thus Nature gives the birds that hebdomadal respite which man would deny them.

"Flight-shooting," says the author of "Instructions to Young Sportsmen," "is always followed with most success in very boisterous weather, provided the course of the birds happens to be against the wind; as this not only obliges them to fly low, but doubles them well together." The birds, also, at such times, it may be observed, if they come at all, come earlier, from having been so much disturbed by the agitation of the sea—fly slower, and alight sooner, instead of making turns. In fact, they are more fatigued and more hungry. But, on these occasions, you want "a good seeing night;" for the rushing noise of the wind behind you drowns the sound of the birds' wings, or voices, which, at other times, generally gives the shooter the first intimation of their approach. The best flight-shooting night I ever saw was certainly one of this description; but though the birds then afford the best shots when they *do* fly, yet it is seldom they fly well on these very windy nights; and I know many superior flight shots who do not like so much wind in general; neither do I, and especially

when in a box, and using, as I nearly always do, Eley's cartridges. A still night, on the other hand, is bad, as you are so much more apt to be deceived by the sound of their wings than when there is a moderate breeze.

When wild fowl at flight—particulary teal and dunbirds—come flying rapidly *with* the wind, they require all the address and quickness of the very best shots to bring them down handsomely. Indeed, I know no shots so difficult in the whole range of shooting; but they are not impracticable.

In returning home, if you have to carry your own birds—as every enthusiastic shooter must do now and then—after having tied them by their necks, fold your silk pocket-handkerchief around the string, thus forming a cushion to protect your hand from being cut. A couple or two of ducks, added to a heavy shoulder-gun, will be felt in a long walk at night, especially if the shooter have had a touch at the partridges during the day.

THE BEST GUN FOR FLIGHT-SHOOTING.

Although the Greathamites, taken collectively, are the best flight-shooters I ever saw, and bag most birds; yet, generally speaking, they have the lightest guns—shoot with loose shot—and rarely ever use shot larger than No. 3. This alone clearly convinces me of the superiority of the box system over all others; for they have all adopted it to a man.

In my young days, the flighters at the Humber side used guns some twelve or fourteen pounds weight, with barrels as long as themselves, nor did they deal out their charge of either powder or shot with a niggard hand. "Two pipe *heeds* (heads), or two and a half of *a sort*," or, in other words, equal measure of powder and shot, was their usual mode of loading, and, for the most part, they used what they called "rough" shot, No. 1, or B: yet though the flight-shooting was then

very good,* and its followers numerous and punctual in their attendance; still their performances, as far, at least, as I ever saw or heard of, were nothing in comparison to the modern shooters of Greatham. The fact is, the former adopted the old plans of stool or straw-sitting on the surface, and we may all of us fancy what we please about ducks caring but little for man in an evening, provided he stand or sit still above ground; it may answer, and does answer, now and then, but if the birds be shyly disposed, as they usually are, depend upon it they are as lynx-eyed to discover us "weak-sighted mortals," as they are cautious to avoid us; whereas they cannot see a man in a box, provided he keep his head low and still, or, at all events, until they are too near him to be able to get out of his way with impunity.

The gun I recommend, to the flight-shooter, is the heaviest he can wield with perfect ease, be it single or be it double. But the former is preferable to the latter, as well for other reasons, as because a second shot at the same flock is very rarely attainable, and a right and left shot occurs even still less frequently. During the early part of flight-shooting you often require a gun which will kill at very long distances, but when it becomes so dark that you cannot distinguish a bird beyond thirty yards at the utmost; then, loose shot, and a gun that you can shoot quickest with, is the best. Taking, therefore, all chances, I recommend a heavy handy gun as the medium; but there are times in the early part of flight-shooting when a very heavy gun would be alone efficacious, and two guns might sometimes be used in the same

* Sunk Island was then open warp, and the shooting was really capital, but the enclosure of this vast tract of superlatively fine corn land, appertaining to the crown, completely ruined the wild fowl shooting there and at Patrington Haven. The poor duck-shooters, alas! may now exclaim, "Seges ubi *Troja!*"

box with advantage. Recollect, when you are sitting coolly in a box, with the gun muzzle resting on the side of it, the gun may be said to be already brought up to the shoulder; and as you shoot nearly always above shoulder level, and not seldom in a position approaching the perpendicular, weight does not tell as on ordinary occasions, and the more so as you are warm and comfortable, and undergoing no fatigue of walking.

From my lengthened details on this description of shooting, upon which but few of my predecessors, I believe, have ever touched at all, and which many sportsmen view with contempt, I fear I may have incurred the displeasure of some of my readers, who may be disposed to consider me—if not a little *tête montee*—certainly somewhat *flightily* disposed. But whatever may be the defects of my narrative, in other respects, I am well assured of this, that, for once at least, I have not got into the wrong box.

REMARKS ON BIRDS WHICH ARE NOT GAME.

" At evening, o'er the swampy plain,
The bittern's boom came far."—SOUTHEY.

BITTERNS.

WHEN shooting in company with " C—h—n, of our Coll.," who, I hope, is still alive and hearty, in a certain fen near Cambridge, one of my pointers raised the small bittern from a sedgy ditch, which I brought down. Being pinioned only,

he shewed *fight* so formidably that Sappho *fought shy*, and this is the only bird of the sort I ever saw alive. A few years ago, a flight of the common bitterns—many of which were shot—visited the neighbourhood of Ripon, in Yorkshire, as was conjectured, from the bogs of Ireland. One of them was shewn to me by Sir Bellingham Graham, which had been shot by himself, and a noble specimen it was, much larger than the other, or little bittern.

BUSTARDS.

During the severe winter of 1823, a bird, very plump and heavy for its size, was brought to me by a person who had shot it near the Humber; and as I was going to have a party of friends to dine that day, I thought it would make "a kind antithesis" to a very fine woodcock, destined also "for that occasion only," to make his appearance upon any stage. From Bewick's description, it was clear that the bird in question could be no other than the little bustard. He was tasted by, at the least, half a dozen individuals as well as myself, and the unhesitating and unanimous verdict was "the very best and most delicious bird that ever smoked on mahogany!" Poor woodcock was quite at a discount. Bewick, if my memory serve me aright, expresses some surprise, as well, indeed, he may, that these birds, common on some parts of the continent, are not domesticated in this country, for most assuredly none of the feathered race would be more worthy of private education. And if the naturalist be fired with indignation at me, for frothing up a bird so very rare, I can assure him that some very harsh epithets were applied to me by some of his brethren before I did penance; that the like shall never recur; and that, after all, one fact, at the least, was thus incontestibly established; namely, that the very best bird that cleaves the air is called *la petite outarde.*

As for the great bustard, now so very scarce in England, I never had the pleasure of seeing him except in a Museum.

THE HERON, OR HERONSHAW.

——— "Lo! at his siege, the hern
Upon the bank of some small purling brook,
Observant stands, to take his scaly prize,
Himself another's game."—SOMERVILE.

This bird is remarkable for the superior sport it affords in hawking; for its solitary habits; its capability of enduring long abstinence; its omnivorous propensity; and its voracious gluttony when food is plentiful. Like the bittern, too, when wounded, it is dangerous for either man or dog to approach, on account of the extreme sharpness and length of its bill, and its readiness and power in darting it. The best plan is to teaze him with a stick, or your ramrod, and after he has seized hold of it with his bill, watch your opportunity of putting your foot on his neck, and then either dispatch him outright, or if merely pinioned, and you wish to take him home, tie his bill and legs, and cover his head with a handkerchief.

There are always herons near the sea coast, where, now and then, one may be observed to alight in some pond or other. This gives the shooter the best chance he can ever expect by day, especially if the banks of the pond be too high for this tall and eagle-eyed bird to overlook. I have shot many herons in this way, on the eastern coast, and know a place on the western where two or three might often be thus shot in a day.

I have counted as many as twenty-one herons at once on the oozes in the Tees Bay, off Saltholme, and might often have killed more than one at a shot with the large gun, had I deemed them worth a large gun's charge.

I took my nine-pound double about three o'clock, one

winter's morning, to a stell, or marshy pool, near the Tees, to watch for ducks; and when standing a yard or two from the water, two herons came within five minutes of each other, both of which I shot. I supposed they had been driven off the mud at high water, as the heron can only fish where he can wade; he is no diver. I had then a retriever who was more than a match for any wounded heron, and who soon brought them to me. It was yet dark, and I was ignorant that the birds were herons when I fired, but should say this is the best of all times to kill them where they are known to frequent.

I shot a heron in Cayton Gill, in Yorkshire, that disgorged part of a trout, which, I am sure, would have weighed, when whole, three quarters of a pound; also another, springing from the same ditch, with a cartridge of Eley's made to my own order, at 142 measured yards. But as these cartridges often balled, they were discarded as dangerous. I was not alone when any of these heron shots were made. I never shoot with the long bow, not having yet found any occasion for it.

CORMORANTS.

"Or left a prey, on some deserted shore,
To the rapacious cormorant."—J. K. White.

If any man could tame a cormorant, and render him as obedient to his will as a tame otter or seal, I imagine he would be better worth his meat than either—as *a fisherman;* for I have seen these creatures, in the Tees Bay, dive to great depths in a strong tide-way, and rarely fail in bringing up a fish. This sentence had been long in my note book before I was aware of the fact, that the suggestion embodies nothing new; and that the fishing with tame cormorants has long been systematically adopted in China and elsewhere. These birds

abound in the Tees Bay, and sit on the sands, at low water, sometimes twenty or thirty together, when they frequently offer a very good shot for a young beginner in a canoe. The mouth of the middle channel there is a common place of resort, where they stand with their wings expanded to the sea, in the form of a spread eagle; but a sand bank on the Redcar side is the most favourite station for these sunny birds—

"Apricis statio gratissima mergis;"

their roosting place being Huntcliffe Rocks, where, in the winter, they listen to the dismal howling of the tempest; and, in the summer, to the whizzing of the gentlemen's rifle-balls —when they are more frequently shot than got, as they remain dead on the ledges of the rocks—

"And waste their sweetness on the desert air."

When I had any new kind of cartridges to try, I used to make the cormorants my target; and many a defunct one did I leave on the sand. Their plumage is, for the most part, a deep, rich, metallic, glossy, green. The beak—'ware fingers!—is uncommonly griping, and the eye remarkably penetrative, fierce, and wild-looking, beyond that of any other bird I have ever seen. They are *not* so fragrant as an early primrose, and, when wounded, bleed most copiously. If you pinion one in shallow water—provided you pursue him with your oars only—and do not fire a gun at him again, he will, by diving, and other shifts, lead two fast-rowing, single-handed canoes, a tremendous race. Franklin and I pursued one under these circumstances for a length of time, and, if I recollect aright, were, after all, obliged to shoot him, or he would have beaten us. I saw a good many nicely placed for a shot on the ooze between Southampton and Redbridge.

If you see a cormorant fishing in a creek, or channel, lie down flat—stooping merely is of no use—on the sand, keeping

an eye upon him; and the instant he dives, up and run, best pace, taking care to be down again before he is up; and thus keep gradually "stealing a march upon him" until you are within shot—when you ultimately stand upright, waiting his last appearance. The astonished emergent, on seeing your awful form, instantly takes wing, and flies heavily away, a very easy shot; but, after all, not quite so easy to kill.

This is also the best plan to get shots at any of the diving tribe, where circumstances will allow.

GREBES,

Of all sorts, are, at one time or other, to be met with in the Tees Bay. If you want one of these, or any other rare bird, for stuffing, in my humble opinion the best and surest plan is, to take the first chance at him with the large gun, loaded with No. 2 or 3 shot, at eighty or one hundred yards. By this means you despatch him unawares, and at once; but if with a view to shoot him with your shoulder-gun you follow him up, you will be almost certain to lose a good deal of time, and, ultimately, in all probability, the bird.

GULLS,

Of all sorts, are worthless as food; and as alarmists, when they mix with really valuable birds, are often worse than even the curlew. Fortunately, they are rare in the Tees Bay during the gunning season.

The best time to shoot them is the month of August, when, during a north wind, they come soaring, often very low, over the tops of the cliffs on the sea coast. Let your dead ones be placed near you on the sand below, as the new comers will hover over them for a moment and present a better shot.

The best time to shoot at a single bird is either just when opposite to you, or the instant he has passed you, for then his

feathers are more open; but, with a double gun, the first barrel must be fired a little sooner. I generally used No. 3 loose shot; though, of course, cartridges would be far preferable if the birds were worth them.

For a young hand the sport is good and affords pretty fair practice; in fact, as these birds can carry away so much shot, it often requires great quickness to bring one down handsomely with each barrel.

The large black-backed gulls are considered worth powder and shot, for the sake of their feathers; and their quills, when clarified, make capital tooth-picks, and not bad pens. I have known them disgorge large herrings when shot; and, as they swallow cockles—shells and all—their digestive powers must be strong.

The bird, when pinioned, if put in a walled garden, soon becomes tame, and will then occasionally display some knowing tricks.

Gull-shooting has the negative merit of improving the gunner's skill more, and of being less cruel than rockbird-shooting —especially as the latter is usually followed during the breeding season, when the sportsman, if no fisherman, will be much better employed in perusing interesting works on his favourite art, and one or two in particular which might be named, could invincible diffidence be overcome.

DOTTEREL.

Of these there are two kinds, the large and the small, or ring dotterel, the latter entirely a coast bird, and the former —though very rarely seen in the Tees Bay—an occasional visitant on some parts of the coast, as on the shores of the Humber, near the Spurn. Both are pretty birds, but between the two there is but little resemblance, and for table purposes one of the larger is worth a whole flock of the

smaller sort. But, as no one has had much less practical acquaintance with them than I have had, I will endeavour to make some little amends for my ignorance by furnishing an original anecdote respecting their migration.

Migration Extraordinary.—The migration of swallows, and of some other birds, has, I believe, occasioned a variety of conjectures among, if it have not proved a titubating poser to, our most scientific naturalists, but the sudden departure of the *dotterel tribe*, alike remarkable for rarity, beauty of plumage, and excellent flavour, may, sometimes, be most satisfactorily accounted for without the interposition of a Yarrell or a Waterton. Some years ago, a friend of mine had the good fortune to fall in with a small trip of these birds, of which he secured two couples, and sent them a present to his Grace the Archbishop of York, from whom he received that urbane reply for which his Grace is so remarkable. At the period of their arrival at Bishopthorpe, his Grace was from home, but sent strict orders for them to be kept in their feathers; the dotterel being a bird whose plumage he had never seen. It so happened that his Grace was then about to hold an ordination, and, therefore, resolved that these choice *morceaux* should appear at his table on the occasion. The candidates were numerous, and among them was one who had been educated at a place called St. Bees, where it is said the vernacular and the polish differ a shade or two from those same at Oxford. At table it fell to St. Bees's lot to sit opposite these two couple of dots, and as a stiff examination under Wrangham was never known to improve the appetite for dinner, S. B. did not feel disposed to *peck*. At length, however, a savoury exhalation, from the well-frothed up *quartet*, having assailed his olfactories, he commenced operations in good earnest. Very shortly afterwards a gentleman on his right, with a look but few could have misinterpreted, politely invited Bees to partake of the dish he was carving. "No! no!" replied our new made *Aurora Borealis*, as he *forked* the fourth dotterel on to his plate. "No thank ye, *I'll stick tot'* little burds!"

It appears, that "*them* was the jockeys for *him?*"

THE GODWIT.

During the winter of 1834 I shot a good many godwits in the Tees Bay; most of them were grey, but a few were, more or less, of a red colour, though I could discover no

other difference than this between the two, in any respect whatever. Some of the very best shots I had in that Bay were made nothing of, in consequence of a sort of phrensy which overcame me for trying experiments with new kinds of cartridges. And once, when unfortunately loaded with a cartridge of very dubious action, I fell in with the most splendid godwit shot ever surely permitted by the gods to mortal man. The bulk of the cartridge balled, and instead of having some dozens to pick up, I got but sixteen. They are sometimes called sea woodcocks, and when nicely cooked, have something of the woodcock flavour, and are most delicious, more so, in my humble opinion, than even the golden plover.

THE LAPWING, OR PEWIT.

The eggs of this interesting and beautiful bird are deservedly celebrated as most nutritious and delicious; but despite the French proverb, the birds themselves, though very good, are certainly not equal to their brethren of the grey, and still less of the golden costume, nor can all the French cookery in the world make them so. Like the curlews they feed both inland and on the oozes, in all weathers, and on the shores of the Tees Bay were very partial, I observed, to burying themselves among the samphire beds. Generally speaking, they are by no means inaccessible birds on the coast, and marshal themselves much more accommodatingly than other plover for a big gun shot, so much so, that vast numbers may sometimes be killed at one discharge. But a single-handed canoe is, in general, by far the best for them, and, indeed, for all the plover tribe. Inland, they sometimes afford an excellent shot for "the inwisible approacher."

THE GREY PLOVER,

Though not entirely a coast bird, is much more so than

either the green or the golden plover. It abounds in Ireland, particularly on the Western coast, but is no where very plentiful in England. Their flight is frequently evolutionary and beautiful. They reach the Tees Bay in October, but very few, indeed, remain there. They are a delicious bird, and are highly worthy the gunner's notice. They breed on the moors, and appear to change their colour in the summer; at all events, I have seen some beautiful stuffed specimens of these birds, spotted over with dark spots, bearing no resemblance to their usual dress.

THE GOLDEN PLOVER,

As a table delicacy, is universally esteemed, and by some considered, of all birds that fly, the best. Although they sometimes abound in Saltholme marshes, where I have shot them with a shoulder-gun, yet I never saw a single one in the Tees Bay, notwithstanding its immediate proximity to those marshes. The fact is, they rarely, if ever, repair to the coast until the approach of severe weather. Few birds keep better together when on the wing than golden plover, and, generally speaking, few straggle more when on the ground, and hence it is sometimes good policy, both with a stanchion and a shoulder-gun, to put them up before you fire.

An early hour, on a misty morning, is a good time to attack golden plover on the moors and elsewhere. These birds have often regular haunts inland, when a stanchion-gun, judiciously planted, may be found singularly efficacious in filling an empty game pannier. The dressing-box, as already hinted, may also frequently be of service.

THE LANDRAIL,

Or corncrake, a somewhat singular looking, yet pretty

bird, when in good condition, weighs seven or eight ounces; and, as a table luxury, is universally considered "an exquisite morsel;" indeed, it is the best of the *rail* family, none of which are to be *railed* against. Its beak is horn-coloured and semi-transparent, and its feet are delicate and beautiful. In short, in appearance, it shews *high-breeding*, and certainly can go a racing pace. A peculiarly sharp looking bird, and as cunning as it looks; it may be said to be "formed for stratagems." Though its length of legs and feet give it an enormous stride, it has a low, crouching gait withal, and by squatting, doubling, and racing alternately, generally contrives to elude the pursuit of the most active and sagacious dogs.

Though plentiful in the islands of Anglesea and Man—in Ireland especially, and in some parts of Scotland—"in England," as Daniel observes, "they are nowhere what may be called common." The regular pursuit of them, where they are so scarce, is, therefore, too tantalizing to afford sport. But whenever they rise in the shooter's beat, he should always endeavour to secure the prize. When once on the wing, all sorts of rails are easy enough to shoot, as they fly slowly, steadily, and directly away, with their legs hanging down like a wounded partridge; but the difficulty is, to get them up at all. Bustling spaniels, or good terriers, are far preferable to pointers for railing; and when the dogs touch on the haunt, the shooter should rather keep walking round than go close to them.

I once had a terrier that beat all the dogs I ever saw for flushing them; but he had great speed, an excellent nose, and was indefatigable in pressing them. He would, also, have pointed partridges for a short time; and was capital in cover for rushing up all sorts of game. Had he been followed up on horseback, on a good scenting day, I think he would have

killed any hare in an open country by himself. He was a remarkably handsome dog, lived to a great age, and ought never to have died.—Alas! poor Jack!

The landrail leaves us in October.

THE WATER-RAIL, AND THE SPOTTED WATER-RAIL,

Are both good birds, and, unless I be very much mistaken, must both be migratory, as I have certainly shot the latter, if not both, during autumn, when rising from the bent, at the Spurn along with the woodcocks.

COOTS

Afford excellent practice for a young shot when with an old pointer, or, what is preferable, a close-hunting spaniel that will take water, and fetch and carry; he brushes them from under the osiers by the river side. Some good diversion of this sort has, ere now, been witnessed on Trent-side, in Derbyshire. They ought never to be shot on ponds, or other ornamental pieces of water, as they are so extremely picturesque in all their movements; and especially when, Camilla-like, they skimmingly trip with their beautifully-fringed feet over the unbending leaves of the water lily. Besides, they startle you so agreeably, when trolling for jack, by suddenly rushing up, as it were, from under your feet. Moreover, according to Colonel Hawker, they are a great attraction to wild fowl; and I know of a few fine large pools in Staffordshire, and other counties, where both coots and wild fowl abound during the winter months. As the weather was always open during my sojourn at the Tees Bay, I never saw but a single coot, which I bagged; but I could not learn that they ever appeared in any considerable numbers there. As the hard weather sets in they migrate farther south; nor does this idea lose anything of probability from the following assertion of the author of

"British Field Sports;" namely, that he "has actually beheld upon the Manningtree river, in Essex, a shoal of coots, reaching *two miles in length, as thick as they could well swim, and half a mile over.*" What a prodigious shot for a stanchion-gun! They abound on the Southampton river at times, and large flocks may occasionally be seen there, even during open weather, but they are then inaccessible; at least, on one such occasion, Buckel and I found them so, in spite of my large gun and Eley's patent cartridge.

The common water-hen, or moor-hen, when well cooked, is a really excellent bird; but I cannot say much in favour of the coot, although it is not without its admirers, especially when in a pie. Coots are naturally pugnacious birds, and, when wounded, will, if you give them a chance, scratch you terrifically, and bite as well.

CURLEWS.

"A curlew, be she white, or be she black,
She carries twelve pence on her back."—Old Saw.

These birds breed chiefly on the moors. I have seen them in the summer season within a mile of Harrogate, and, when shot on the moors, they are said to be remarkably good eating. To this point I am unable to speak from personal experience, never having tasted a curlew shot inland; but I have tasted the coast-fed bird once, and will back that man who can eat one for his breakfast, to eat *anything* for dinner; though it certainly is not so great a delicacy as an old sheldrake roasted with the skin on.

In open weather, and during the day, unless you have the advantage of a deep creek—and rarely even then—this most suspicious and quick-sighted bird, may be said to be absolutely unapproachable. But when the tide suits, you may sometimes catch them just after dusk, or before the grey of the morning,

at their favourite haunts, which are always those headlands or banks of mud, or sand, that are the first to be exposed by the receding, and the last to be covered by the incoming tide, and where they remain as long as they can "*boot* it," but are off when the water reaches their feathers. You may either use a single or a two-handed canoe, provided you have water for the latter, and in which case the approach must be from the sea, and directly end on; but, generally speaking, the plan of "a small punt, or canoe, kept close alongside, and under the shade of, the land," as recommended by Colonel Hawker, will be found the best, and often the only plan. When once thus settled, no birds present a finer shot to the gunner, provided only he can get within shot of them;* and I must say, to me, one of the *deliciæ* of coast-shooting is to come Yorkshire over these gentlemen on such an occasion, and in open weather. But though so remarkably wary during the latter period, a few days' frost soon brings them to, even in the day time; and in very severe weather, they cluster together, stand on one leg, and become easy of access, very heavy shots being then frequently made among them, and a good deal of money by the gunners who shoot for a livelihood, as these birds retain their condition a long time, and taste best during severe weather.

Curlews have long wings, and, at times, fly fast; but they often keep well together, and sometimes give you a good, flying, long shot. They certainly require a hard blow, but are not, I think, so tenacious of life as some suppose. I have fre-

* The accomplished night-shooter must have a good ear for music, so as to be able to distinguish the voices of different kinds of birds—the young from the old, and their respective distances from him; and of all other birds he will find the note of the curlew the most deceptive, as (from its loud shrillness, probably,) you always suppose the bird to be much nearer than it really is.

quently shot them dead at very long distances, and they are by no means either a hard feathered or a close feathered bird. They are among the very last birds to leave the coast in the spring.

If I may be allowed to introduce an anecdote on no better authority than that of a poor, but "nate Irishman," who certainly knew "the worm of the still" from a lob-worm, and an oyster from both—I may name that, once on a day, a party of Irishmen, working on the shores of Erin, had their attention suddenly attracted towards a bird hovering high in air, by the pitiful shrieks it was emitting, and which, shortly afterwards, descending rapidly to the ground, in an exhausted state, was easily taken captive. It then was evident that a curlew had been regaling himself in an oyster bed, when one of them "in a close" had caught him by the lower mandible, and retaining his hold with game tenacity, had thus ultimately *floored* his antagonist, and bit the biter!

THE LITTLE CURLEW, OR WHIMBREL.

These birds appear in flocks of from six to a dozen on the eastern coast in the month of May, and are there always called "curlew jacks." Sometimes they feed upon the shore; at others they repair to the fields adjacent; and, generally speaking, with a little stratagem, are easy of approach, and will sometimes allow you to have two or three successive shots at them before they will fly very far. I have shot many in my time with a common fowling-piece, but found the large gun, and "the invisible approach," as described by Colonel Hawker, the best wholesale mode of destruction, especially on the sand, as a pound of No. 3 was often found singularly efficacious.

They are excellent eating at this period, and are, at any

time, as much superior to the other curlews as a leveret, one may suppose, is to a Tom cat.

When on the mud, they will often mix, in small numbers, with other birds — as dunlin, teal, oxbirds, and sea-pies especially.

THE OXBIRD, PURRE, OR STINT.

During severe weather these little birds are extremely easy of access, and dozens of them are often brought down at one shot; but in open weather, even with the advantage of a large gun, you cannot always get as many as will make a pie, albeit an excellent pie they make. In such a place as the Tees Bay, where there is scarcely a creek worthy the name, a single hand, with a small stanchion-gun, or large shoulder double, fixed in a light canoe, may get these birds, at times, when a large two-handed canoe could not float within half a mile of them. I frequently shot them in this way at the turn of tide; for like curlews, dunlin, &c., they have their regular haunts, to which they keep removing according to the state of the tide; and no sooner does the receding water bare the mud, than they flock to these resorts, sometimes at the water's edge, but as often to some mound of mud, or sand, at a short distance from shore, which peeps above the surface long before the ebbing tide has receded so far, and where, in fact, many sorts of birds are wont to congregate promiscuously. And hence, an artificial island, such as Colonel Hawker suggests, if judiciously placed near a creek, or otherwise, will often prove destructively attractive to coast birds, and especially of this sort. The Colonel's suggestion of taking them from a canoe on a gravelly point, at high water, especially during a white frost, is sound, practical, gunning doctrine. On such an occasion as this it was that I bagged sixty-three of these birds at one shot, and that with No. 6.

Some birds appear to fly rather circuitously to their feeding ground, but most fly direct, and the *tringæ* tribe are of the latter description. When flying for pleasure, or when roused, their flight is often lofty, circuitous, and beautifully evolutionary; but when hungrily repairing to the new bared ooze, it is rapid, straight forward, and, generally, near the surface of the water. Hence it is sometimes a good plan, just before the ebb commences, to cast anchor at some distance from shore, and to lie down close in your canoe; as, by this means, you may occasionally get a good flying shot as the birds pass you; and if not, you are ready for the approach as soon as they are comfortably settled on the mud.

For one who shoots merely for exercise and sport, these small birds afford capital fun; and sometimes—when most regardless of superior sport—he falls in, generally, better than those who have "their monster mortars" afloat on the deeper water. By four or five shooters getting into shooting-boxes, placed at proper distances from each other, from high to low watermark, and then getting others to drive the birds off the mud, good flying shots may be made at stints and other birds.

Though they often have a rather bitter taste, these stints are accounted very rich-flavoured birds, and are purchased by the London cooks for the purpose of making gravy.

BRENT-GEESE.

I shot a good many of these in the Tees Bay. They are always either very shy, or rather the contrary; but are not near so difficult to bring to bag as the common wild geese, as they generally present (at least in open weather) a much thicker shot, take less shot to stop them, and do not dive so plaguily. They often afford very good flying shots, as they seldom fly high, sometimes extremely low, and, now and then, pack well together.

BRENT-GOOSE SHOOTING IN TEES BAY.

The female is less bright in plumage than the male, and in the young birds the white ring on the neck is either very faintly defined, or wholly wanting. Though somewhat heavy in their flight, they swim light and fast, and their small heads, long, black, glossy necks, and white tails, give them a rather elegant appearance on the water; and hence they "lend a charm" to ornamental pieces of water, though I never heard of their breeding in a domesticated state. When stripped of their feathers they appear little bigger than a large mallard, and are very good eating.

Brent-geese abound in Holland and in Ireland; and in severe weather appear in clouds on the southern coasts of England; but all the gunners in the Tees complain of their annually increasing scarcity there.

In going up to these birds in a canoe, the moment they stretch their necks, is the signal to fire.

BERNACLES.

These geese literally swarm on the western coast of Ireland, are common in Scotland, and pretty numerous at the Solway Firth; but I never saw one in the Tees Bay, nor heard of one being shot whilst I was on that part of the coast, though they have often fallen there before the death-dealing tube, in days of yore. The fact appears to be, that the immense increase of shipping and steam navigation in the Bay, has, in great measure, banished the more shy kinds of wild fowl, and these geese among the rest.

COMMON WILD GOOSE, OR GREY LAG.

Although it be somewhat the fashion to abuse this bird as unfit for the table, I yet, for my own part, cannot help thinking a young wild goose a very fair dish. These geese abound in the Saltholme marshes, near the Tees Bay, from autumn to spring,

though I was assured that, on the approach of severe weather, they leave that neighbourhood altogether. Except when disturbed at home they are but seldom seen in the Bay. By taking a light narrow canoe and shoulder-gun up the drains, an effective shot might, now and then, be made with a large shoulder-gun. By the obliging permission of Mr. Nightingale, the occupier of this fine tract of land, I tried "the invisible approach," in broad daylight, and as I got sufficiently near to a large flock of geese, with my heavy gun, to have killed one or two—though I refrained from firing—I conclude that a more finished performer, with a lighter gun and a lower carriage, would be able to throw an Eley among them with murderous effect. The ground here being all firm and level as a bowling-green, and, for the most part, in grass, is just the place for working a stanchion-gun over. But no doubt these cacklers might be outschemed at night, as their haunts are well known. At the same time it must not be forgotten that the goose is a particularly wide awake gentleman at that season; an animal easily disturbed by noises at night:—"*Solicitum animal ad nocturnos strepitus*," says Livy.

By first digging a deep, narrow hole, like a human grave, removing the earth entirely, and concealing himself therein with a large shoulder-gun, a person near Frodsham, in Cheshire, has been known to make heavy shots among the wild geese in the marshes in that neighbourhood. For this work, the fourteen pound double (p. 482) would be the thing. Large flocks of wild geese are often seen in Lincolnshire, particularly on the fine coursing-ground at Withcall, in the occupation of Richard Dawson, Esq., where they feed on the green wheat in perfect tranquillity. For, as Mr. Dawson himself told me, "they never think of firing at them." Indeed, they appeared to me the tamest wild geese I had ever seen.

In very severe weather these birds repair, at more than a railroad pace, to the southern coast, where they congregate in thousands, and, so long as the storm continues, afford fine sport, and a rich harvest, to the fraternity of big gunners, to which the humble author of these pages has the honour to belong.

BLACK DUCK, SCOTER, OR BLACK DIVER.

If the reader were compelled to be metamorphosed into a bird, he, perhaps, could not do better than exclaim—"Black diver for choice." For these birds, in addition to being as hard as flint, can, if they please, weather any sea-storm that ever arose, and as they feed entirely on shell-fish, for which they will dive to any depth, the severest frost, which starves the birds that feed on the surface, has no effect whatever on their condition.

As some of these birds, to my certain knowledge, were shot in April, 1838, and some in October, 1839, on the large reservoirs near Blackstone Edge, in Lancashire, it seems quite clear that they occasionally cross the country from sea to sea; if not regularly in the spring and autumn. There are numbers of them nearly always on the sea, near Redcar rocks. On one occasion, on the open sea off Seaton, I shot eight of these birds, flying at one discharge; and the next shot brought down five flying, one of which was cut fairly in two by a partially balling cartridge, and yet the head half shewed signs of animation for some time afterwards, and the entrails appeared almost as tough as leather.

They are very rarely seen in the Tees Bay, where their presence is invariably considered the prelude to a storm.

SCAUP DUCKS.

These birds have handsome plumage, and are always fat,

because their food (shell fish) lies too deep under water to be affected by frost. But few find their way to the Tees, except in very severe weather, when "three thousand in a flock" may sometimes be seen there. They are easy of access in almost any kind of weather, but in hard weather especially; and of all the birds that float on salt water, they swim in the best form for a shot, but take a hard blow to dispatch them, and being professional divers are not so easy as many birds to bring to bag.

They are good sale at one shilling or one shilling and threepence each, and the common gunners always rejoice to greet them on their arrival, particularly as when they once come, they remain until the spring, and will frequently allow you to administer "the pills as before," several times a day.

They never go out upon the sand. In Morecambe Bay many are caught in nets set for the purpose, as they dive for cockles.

SHELL DUCKS.

These birds are very beautiful in plumage, very fast swimmers, very wild in open, very tame in severe weather, and, as an edible, are very rancid. A common trick played upon the London cockneys is to serve them out with a couple of shell ducks in lieu of wild ducks. The heads and white legs of the former having been cut off, and the birds plucked, as they are just about the size of the latter, and always look plump, they sell better, and it is thus that wild ducks are libelled for eating so "fishy!"

During my sojourn at the Tees Bay, I shot many scores of shell ducks in open weather, and as all the rest of the gunners did not shoot a score among them, I consider this a decisive proof, both of Robin Hood's skill as a sculler, and of the superiority of my mode of managing a canoe.

The best time to get at these birds, and, it may be added, at most others, during an open season, is just after very boisterous weather, of long duration, when the wind is subsiding a little; then you may, sometimes, pop out in your canoe, and catch a large flock well placed on a sand side, they being then, probably, more than usually in need of rest from having been so long tossed on a tempestuous sea.

I have also remarked that just previous to their pairing, these birds are less wary than usual; and that the note they then emit bears a striking resemblance to the "cock-cock," or challenge of the male grouse.

I have shot them at night on the mud, sometimes alone, and sometimes interspersed with curlews.

During the spring they are occasionally shot at flight. At a distance, an unpractised eye is very apt to mistake them for the common wild ducks.

When taken young, they are easily tamed, and are extremely ornamental on private ponds; but, as Daniel justly remarks, "the *young males* remain of a greyish brown, not greatly unlike the plumage of the females, until February, when they first gain the proper dress of their sex." A large shell drake in prime feather, riding over the azure swell, either alive or when just killed, is one of the most beautiful sights which nature offers to the gunner's eye.

WILD DUCKS,

When thorough-bred are somewhat smaller than even the smallest breeds of tame ones; but, being more elegantly formed than the latter, and especially about the head and neck, are much handsomer and more lively looking birds. The usual weight of the mallard, or drake, is about two pounds and a half, and that of the duck somewhat less; but the foreigners are generally larger than the homebreds.

I have shot wild ducks in the Tees Bay above six pounds and a half the pair; but, if much beyond this weight, I should suspect their purity of breed; as it is well known that, from various causes, the wild and tame sorts occasionally intermix.

Wild ducks, excepting a few homebreds, whose full grown young ones are fine eating in August, do not appear in the Tees Bay until November, or at all events, in any number worth mentioning.

The mallards are very poor in condition after the middle of February, not so the ducks.

Flapper-shooting, if neither insipid nor unfair sport, is illegal.

PINTAILED DUCKS, OR SEA PHEASANTS.

A few of these birds are killed by the flight-shooters, and a few by the gunners, in the Tees Bay—chiefly in October; but I never saw many there at any time, and particularly after that month; nor could I learn that this place had ever been a favourite resort with them. When wounded they are the quickest and the farthest divers in existence, escaping you, you know not how; and unless manifestly *in extremis*, the cripple-net should never be thought of until they are laid on their backs.

Both the cock and hen are handsome birds—the former remarkably so; and, as an edible, they are as good as they look, being by many considered superior to all the *anas* tribe; and certainly they *are* remarkably fine eating.

When flying, they are readily distinguished from most other wild fowl, by the peculiar and loud whizzing noise of their wings. On the sand, or water, I have generally found them less shy when in company with other birds—particularly widgeon—than when by themselves.

They are at no time very common in any part of England, but are pretty numerous in some parts of the emerald isle, where I hope, one day, to have a shot at them. Next to a flock of ocellated turkeys, near the Bay of Honduras — or better than these—than all—a rap at the canvass backs on the Potowmac, or Susquehanna—commend me to the kingdom of Connaught, and a raking sweep at a noble flock of pintails!

WIDGEON

Are by far the most numerous, and afford the finest shots, of all wild fowl; and that must be a fine flavoured bird which tastes better than a fat young widgeon nicely roasted.

"Both sexes," says Daniel, "are alike until the spring, after hatching (this obtains in the pintail,* the gadwall, and the shoveller, who are all grey, and have no beautiful feathers when young), when the males, about March, gain their full plumage, but lose it again the end of July, and with it, in some measure, their voice, which they regain, and always use during their flight in the winter season, and which is thought to be like the sound of a fife. Their flesh is much esteemed, and they are easily domesticated in places where there is much water, and are greatly admired for their beauty, sprightly look, and active, frolicsome motions."

A few of these birds may sometimes be seen in the Tees Bay as early as the month of August; but the main flocks do not arrive there before September and October. Some of them are late in leaving us; I have shot them in the Bay in April; and a few years ago, in the month of May, when steaming it from Hull to Selby, I counted about sixty widgeon swimming in one flock, in the Humber.

* The young cock pintail, however, may still be distinguished from the hen, by the greater length of his tail.—AUTHOR.

TEAL

Are most beautiful little birds in form and plumage; and, from their comparative rarity, the sport which they afford, and their being among the most delicate birds that grace the mahogany, are great favourites with the sportsman.

They come to us in October and during the winter months, and leave us in the spring. Some few remain with us altogether, and breed; I have myself known them to breed both in Yorkshire and Lancashire; but they are not prolific.

When residing in Holderness, near the German Ocean, I now and then — as I presume most sportsmen, similarly situated, have done—fell in with a brood of teal, consisting of the two old ones, and three, four, or five young ones; and, as they generally kept flying from one pond to another, rarely failed of carrying the better half, and sometimes the whole of them, home.

They arrive in flocks at the Tees Bay in October, and, just at first, afford a fine shot or two for a large gun, but soon take shelter in the decoy ponds, out of which they never stir—except at flight time in an evening—until the first sharp frosts appear, when a few flocks of twenty or thirty in each may be seen flying about the Bay, but they are very shy then, and seldom rest long in a place.

In April, a few small flocks may be seen in the Bay, most probably on their return from the south. They then are very easy of approach, so much so that I have often cleared off the whole company at a shot—in one instance amounting to eleven. Throughout the season they are to be shot at flight in the Tees Bay, but are then extremely difficult to kill, being, from their diminutive size, and rapid flight, almost invisible in the dusk. But they are nice birds to shoot in the dark with a large gun, as they make such a noise

TEAL SHOOTING IN TEES BAY.

when they get together. They appear to relish samphire. In conclusion, reader, one gastronomic hint—teal pie is *tres excellent!*

QUAILS.

Like most other shooters I have occasionally shot a quail when beating for other game, and especially in the early part of the season; but I never saw even two together, much less a *bevy*, in the whole course of my life. They are remarkable for their pugnacity, and for their striking resemblance in figure, colour, and habits, to our common partridge, though not half so big. They are very delicate eating, and, except for their diminutive size, are an easy shot. But as to my saying more about quail-shooting, after such slender practical experience, I should *quail* to do it. In Mr. Blaine's "Encyclopædia of Rural Sports," however, the reader will find a very full and interesting account of this bird.

THE RING-DOVE, CUSHAT, OR WOOD-PIGEON,

Is too well known to need formal description, and for its size, is, perhaps, the most difficult bird to kill of all others, in consequence of its feathers being hard and close, its skin thick and thickly covered with a close down, and its flesh very firm and plump; circumstances all adverse to the easy penetration of shot. Add to which no bird is stronger or more rapid on the wing. It weighs twenty-two ounces.

Wood-pigeons are sad enemies to ripening corn, so that by hiding yourself pretty early in the morning, near the place where the corn is laid, a good sitting shot may sometimes be made at a flock of them; so also at the ponds where they go to drink.

The heaviest shots, no doubt, may be made with a stanchion-gun and "the invisible approach," when the ground

is deeply covered with snow; but as these birds then feed on cabbages, turnips, and other green food, their flesh contracts a bitter and unpleasant taste, which no cooking can effectually remove; and, therefore, it is pity to shoot them then, as they are so good in open weather, during the autumnal and winter months, and make a pie so superlatively excellent.

In September, whilst the leaves are yet green, they are very fond of perching in hedgerow trees, particularly oak and ash; but when the leaves fall, they confine themselves more to the hollies, and such trees as are mantled with the creeping ivy (for the timid cushat ever courts concealment), and where it is next to impossible to spy them out, and as they are certain, if left to themselves, to fly out on the wrong side, the best way is for you, having first stationed yourself at a favourable point, to whistle to your attendant, who must then face you, and throw a clod or stick into the tree. But to make sure play, two shooters and an attendant are not too many.

They are remarkably fond of the beech nut, and when feeding upon it are uncommonly fat and fine eating; so much so that those shot at Beechwood, at the proper season, are regularly sent by the sporting baronet, and worthy owner of that beautiful spot, as presents, being then considered by many quite equal to any game.

They pair in March, a very good time for shooting them, especially if you want to secure a pair for the Museum. My plan, then, was to form an ambush, or arbour, by bending down the hazels under a holly-bush, and there remaining quite still, especially when they are lowering to alight. At this season they appear to prefer the tops of the tallest trees in the wood, especially the ash, and the instant they alight they look wildly around them, with a restless eye, out-stretched-neck, and quick-moving head, and have then a graceful appearance, much resembling that extremely fine-shaped bird,

the carrier pigeon. But if you remain motionless as a statue they will soon settle, and generally sit pretty close together. You then slowly and gradually raise your gun, especially if the birds be sitting with their faces towards you, take a deliberate aim, and the birds *fall!* A stout single, with Eley's patent cartridges—the shooter being placed about forty yards from the favourite trees—is, I think, the best and the most economical receipt; at all events, I found it answer right well.

There are two cases in which a party of shooters, by taking their waiting posts just before dusk on a winter's evening, may, now and then, have good sport among these doves; and no time better than a boisterous evening in November. The one case is, when each shooter secretes himself in a fir-clump, or small plantation, where a few such occur at intervals; as, when shot at, these birds keep flying from one to another, and afford sport as long as you can see to shoot them. The other is where, in vast multitudes, they repair to roost in the deep recesses of some well grown covert, and where appearances, during the day, having betrayed their usual roosting places, the happy dove-shooters sally forth and steal into the solemn wood, posting themselves at judicious distances from each other, a moderate space from the favourite trees, and with their faces to the wind.

Under "Pheasant-Shooting" I have noted a case where the flight of the cock pheasant appears to me to unusual advantage; nor can the curious observer of nature have neglected to notice that beautiful peculiarity in the male wood-pigeon, during the pairing season, of suddenly mounting in the air like a balloon, then flapping his wings with a distinct sound, and descending as rapidly. But cold indeed must be the heart which sees no beauty in even the meanest of the Creator's works.

Still, notwithstanding its pleasing habits and manners, and sublime mountings; notwithstanding its being the bird of poesy and romance; the gentle and plaintive cooing cushat knows pretty well how to take care of himself, as may be gathered from the following enumeration of the contents of the crop of one shot in an evening after it had fully fed:—664 grains of oats; 30 beans and peas; 10 acorns; besides a handful of green clover.

Surely this is living in clover with a vengeance; no wonder a wood-pigeon should make a *grill* so admirable, or should show so plump under a *puff* crust.

REDWINGS AND FIELD-FARES

Afford good sport to the tyro, especially during snow time; and as, in the estimation of no worse judges than the epicures of ancient Rome, they make an uncommonly good roast, are well worthy, too, of the senior sportsman's attention, when the snow forbids the pursuit of game. In open weather both are shy birds, but the field-fare is, at all times, much the more so, and this, perhaps, may be the reason why he prefers roosting on the ground at night, whilst brother redwing braves the hedgerow and the bat fowling-net. The stout single shoulder-gun, and Eley's cartridges; the shooting-box, in which a light stanchion-gun might be fixed; and "the invisible approach," judiciously arranged according to circumstances, are the grand receipts for "doing business in a large way" with these wary birds, whether in large flocks on the ground, or on the topmost twigs of some lofty tree.

These beautiful birds reach us in October, in immense flocks, from Norway and Sweden; and, though nearly silent whilst here, on their return enliven the gloom of their native woods with the richest strains of melody.

LARKS.

Lark-shooting is very good practice for a young beginner, and though, when fired at singly, they cannot, perhaps, be said to be worth powder and shot, yet they are excellent eating. As soon as the frost sets in, they congregate, and as the weather becomes severe, proceed southward; but, on the accession of a thaw, return again, as I believe, to their old haunts, and separate as before. For on one occasion, after four or five days' frost, a thaw commenced, when hundreds of larks, for days in succession, kept crossing the Tees Bay from the south. By concealing "the invisible approach," and sprinkling on the ground a long train of chaff and small seeds* (the snow, if any there be, having been first swept aside), forming it gradually wider as you recede from the gun, you may, in severe weather, kill as many larks as you please with No. 7 or 8 shot; but they then soon become very poor, when they are not worth shooting.

If you go out shooting larks for the sake of the birds, and not merely "by way of *a lark*," when you find them in small flocks you may often do the best by shooting at any one you may see *on the ground*, as by this means you may kill two or three others in the line which you did not see at the time you fired; and you have still a second chance with a double gun. Seed fields and fallows are generally the best fields for larks.

* When "The Mentor" was wrecked at Seaton, a vast quantity of damaged hemp-seed was given away to a person who used it as a top-dressing for his grass land. This proved so strong an attraction to the small birds, especially the linnets, that, although the weather was open, it was no uncommon thing for any village lad to knock over thirty or forty at a shot with the most inferior gun.

CONCLUSION.

In the way of termination to this subject, the sportsman and naturalist will, I hope, deem the following extract from a letter I received from my friend Lieut. F., of Ripon, as no impertinent intrusion. I requested him to make inquiry as to what rare birds had been shot in that neighbourhood, and the following is the result of his research:—

An Egyptian goose* was shot by Samuel Parker, of Hutton, at that place, on the 29th of December, 1827; and is now in the possession of Mr. Thomas Stubbs, Governor of the House of Correction at this place; there were no other geese in company.

A white-fronted goose was shot out of a flock of fifty, by Mr. Thomas Charnock, in a pasture of Earl De Grey's, near Newby Hall, in the winter of 1827.

Mr. Thomas Stubbs has a fine specimen of "the least puffin" or "Greenland dove," which was caught alive in a field adjoining Thorp Lodge, near Ripon, in the month of July, 1836.

Also, a pair of small spotted "galinutes," shot by Mr. Thomas Charnock, in Monkton Ings.

A fine specimen of "the peregrine falcon," shot by Mr. Robert Smith, in March, 1830.

A pair of "reed wrens" (with nest), shot by Mr. Thomas Charnock. It is worthy of note that these birds are occasionally mistaken for the "sedge warbler," but the formation of the nest, which is suspended from a reed, sets this matter at rest.

* A pair of these birds have bred in the Manchester Zoological Gardens, and appear to be remarkably tame.

A fine male specimen of "the white nun," or "smew," shot by Earl De Grey's keeper in the year 1827.

A "grasshopper warbler," shot by himself, near Moor Monkton, about 1828.

Mr. John Stubbs stuffed eight wild swans, shot in the neighbourhood of Ripon, in 1837.

He stuffed also, for Captain Dalton,* a fine specimen of "Bulwer's petrel," supposed to be the only one in England. It was found dead near Tanfield, on the 9th of March, 1837: —and for Charles Oxley, Esq., a fine specimen of the forked-tailed petrel, found dead on the banks of the river Ure, near Ripon, in 1834.

* This gentleman, who resides near Ripon, and with whom I have the pleasure to be acquainted, is a very good shot, excellent in the saddle, and as a fisherman, and a scientific ornithologist, surpassed by few; nor are his social qualities inferior to his sporting qualifications.

APPENDIX.

No. 1.—Page 123.

"The circumstances in which wet feet and cold feet are most apt to cause disease, are where the person remains inactive, and where, consequently, there is nothing to counterbalance the unequal flow of blood which then takes place towards the internal parts; for it is well known, that a person in ordinary health may walk about, or work in the open air, with wet feet, for hours together, without injury, provided he put on dry stockings and shoes immediately on coming home. It is, therefore, not the mere state of wetness that causes the evil, but the check to perspiration, and the unequal distribution of blood to which the accompanying coldness gives rise."—*Combe's Physiology applied to Health.*

No. 2.—Page 193.

"Heather tops, when young and tender, are eaten by sheep as well as birds; while such of it as is taller, becomes useful as shelter during the prevalence of hurricane blasts; but still there must be a regular rotation of burning; and it is a remarkable fact that storemasters, in promoting the welfare of their flocks, act, without intending it, as the ally of sportsmen, in catering to the wants of various kinds of game. When the weather is favourable, burning frequently commences in the beginning of March, and continues from four to six weeks, according to circumstances. The duration of the burning season is exceedingly variable, and, speaking generally, there is no part of the business in rural life in which mountaineers are so apt to get into arrear. Were the weather always dry in March and April, moor-burn might go forward as regularly as clock-work; but the elements are often adverse at the most critical period, and, however favoured afterwards, the storemaster is restrained, by Act of Parliament, from disturbing, beyond a certain day, the breeding haunts of mountain hare, partridge, and grouse.

"When the ground is in a fit state, the process of firing heath is exceed-

ingly simple. Armed with tinder-box, steel, and flint, or a live peat within the points of tongs, when the distance is short, the shepherds and their assistants proceed to the destined point of operation; and the moment a flame is raised it is easy to extend it, by scattering dry brackens in all directions. Fern, for the most part, is as plentiful as heather, and when free from sap and damp, few substances are more inflammable. Boys are exceedingly fond of this sport, and run about scattering embers with a degree of agility that leaves their elders little to do. Thin heather, when fired, is apt to go out, and therefore requires a good deal of coaxing; but when thick and compact, the business is easy, particularly when advantage is promptly taken of those stirring winds which fan the most incipient flame into expansive breath. Spret, or long coarse grass, burns rapidly, and seldom requires an additional match so long as a single tuft remains to be consumed; and the ashes thus scattered far and wide, act as a compost, or top-dressing, which communicates to the succeeding crop of grass a degree of sweetness that speedily recommends itself to the patient nibblers on the hill-side. When the crackling of flames is first heard, the whole of the wild animals within cover become alarmed, and it is amusing to witness the haste with which hares scamper, and grouse and black-cocks whirr away to some place of safety. When the heather is on fire, anything more sublime than the hills in a blaze, near and in the distance, can hardly be imagined." —*Dumfries Courier.*

No. 3.—Page 233.

"Hast thou through Eden's wild wood vales pursued
Each mountain scene magnificently rude?"—Rogers.

Nunnery, situated on the banks of the river Eden, about seven miles east of Penrith, is the residence of Francis Aiglionby, Esq., M.P. for East Cumberland, a good scholar, a worthy man, and "a generous Briton," who "venerates the plough," and, therefore, a fit and proper person to be the owner of *such* a place, whose varied and romantic beauties I shall not attempt to depict, persuaded as I am that George Robins himself could alone do them justice. Indeed, were it not a somewhat ominous and sombre theme for a lady to touch upon, a hope might have been indulged that some one of my fair countrywomen might have been induced to have founded a poem on this little Rokeby of Cumberland; since Hemans, alas!—and, alas! she of those much-beloved initials—have gone

"Where the music of light is that of life,
And the starry harps are swelling."

In winter these Druidical regions afford fine cock-shooting; and who, in

summer, can linger in those hallowed groves, or rivet his strained eye on those beauteous cascades, without feeling himself pervaded by, at the least, a portion of that loving phrensy which entranced the soul of the sweet poet of antiquity :—

"Auditis? an me ludit amabilis
Insania? audire et videor *pios*,
Errare per *lucos, amœnæ*
Quos et aquæ subeunt et auræ."

Let others admire the smoke, the gas, the noise, the wealth of cities, but, for my own part,

"Ego laudo *ruris amœni*
Rivos, et musco circumlita saxa nemusque;"

and here you have all these in perfection.

Yes, reader, sure I am, when thou shalt visit this scene of enchantment, thou wilt, in imagination at least, haply in reality, behold some poetess of the north—some veritable lady of the lakes, with harp responsive to the feathered choristers of Nunnery, with fairy hand scattering "golden violets" in her groves; or, it may be—motionless on those rocks—gazing on those silvery falls,—like Venus on a watch-tower, smiling at the ocean's foam.

Alas! reader, since the above was first in manuscript, the owner of Nunnery has been summoned to his final audit, and in a manner awfully sudden. In ascending the staircase in the Court House, at Carlisle, to take the chair as chairman of the Quarter Sessions—a chair he had so often and so ably filled—he fell to rise no more!

"*Multis ille bonis flebilis occidit.*"

No. 4.—Page 238.

Eastward of this peninsula once stood the borough of *Ravenspurn*, which sent two members to Parliament; but owing to some disfranchising incursion or other of old ocean, it has long been washed out of human ken—

"Jam *sea is*, ubi Troja fuit!"

It is, however, memorable still, as having been the *first* place in Britain in which the gun was introduced; for "the first hand-guns," as Daniel relates, "known in this kingdom, was when Edward IV., A.D. 1471, landed at *Ravenspurg*, in Yorkshire, who brought with him, among other forces. 300 *Flemings*, armed with 'hanges-gunnes.'"

No. 5.—Page 323.

"Who forms the phalanx, and who points the way?"—Pope.

In very severe weather I have no doubt the southern coast affords by far the best wild fowl shooting, not only because the bulk of the birds already arrived repair thither on such occasions, but because it is then that fresh flocks migrate thither, in multitudinous hosts, from the Continent. A case of this kind occurred in the middle of December, 1840; when, about seven o'clock, on a very dark evening, the air was filled with the cries of wild ducks, widgeon, and curlews, passing over Godalming, in Surry. The flight seemed to be driving towards the south, and continued passing till half-past eight, or nine o'clock. The number must have been immense, for, overhead, and on every side, they were heard to the farthest stretch of the ear. Surely there is something truly grand in a flight like this!—the blackness of the night—their invisibility—the time and space occupied in passing—their fine sonorous clamour—the mighty whizzing of their wings—the ὥσπερ νέφος.

No. 6.—Page 326.

The *knot*, *knute*, or *knout*, are all corruptions of *nute*, the abbreviated name of King Canute, with whom this bird was a favourite *morceau*, and from whom, in consequence, its name was derived; nor can any one dispute the ancient monarch's taste, since it *is* a dainty dish to set before any king. It weighs but four ounces and a half, is a species of sandpiper, and an inhabitant of the fens, where it remains until the frost compels it to repair to the sea-coast.

Previous to the enclosure of Sunk Island, these birds were innumerable on the Yorkshire side the Humber, where, five-and-thirty years ago, I have frequently shot them with a shoulder duck-gun; and where Moulton, the Boston gunner, used to make terrible havoc among these "plover knot," as he called them; for no birds are more delightfully accommodating than they for the sweep of a large gun, as they are not only easier of approach than most coast birds, but both fly and sit in flocks, just in the desired form—namely, "as thick as they can stick."

I believe they are never seen in the Tees Bay, but still abound on the less tenacious oozes of Lynn and Boston.

STANCHION-GUNS.

The owners of these stanchion-guns were Moulton and Kemp, from Boston, and of whom mention is made elsewhere. I reminded the former

of this day's sport some twenty-five years afterwards, and asked him what they got on *that* day? His reply was short, pithy, and graphic. "We got *plenty of iverything!*" Of course including *sport*. What more can a gunner wish for, or any one else, indeed?

No. 7.—Page 332.

My intercourse with the late Mr. John Manton was confined to a few desultory conversations; but, though I had no dealings with him myself, I am acquainted with many sportsmen who had, all of whom appeared perfectly satisfied with their gunmaker, who certainly turned out very sound work. He was remarkable for having stood out in favour of flint and steel longer than any other of the fraternity, and with a pertinacity worthy a better cause; but, at length, wisely yielded to "the increasing knowledge of the times." It is said that "two of a trade can ne'er agree," and that "proverbs are always true." Mr. John Manton, however, enjoyed the singular felicity of possessing the good-will and esteem of all his brethren, whether of the scintillating or of the detonating order. Like his brother "Joe," his appearance and address were both much in his favour. And, lastly, if—

"An honest man's the noblest work of God,"

John had claims to nobility.

With the late Joe Manton I have frequently had dealings. Indeed, it may be said that scarcely any man living was altogether proof against the honied persuasion of "Joe;" nor was it hardly a reflection upon the better sense of even a cautious person to be talked into the purchase of a gun by him, such was the fascination of his glib tongue, whose "oiliness of tell" was quite equal to that of his locks. The magic of eloquence, like that of beauty, is often found to possess "strange power," but Joe's was positively irresistible. It was not, indeed, the foaming torrent rushing headlong from the mountain with impetuous fury, but rather resembled that transparent rill which, gently *serpentining* through banks of moss, murmurs as it flows. How many a very worthy man has been heard pompously to declare that he would never encourage such extravagant prices in guns. Not he, indeed!—nay, who has absolutely gone to Joe himself with a lecture already cut and dried, for the express purpose of remonstrating with him on the injury thus inflicted upon sportsmen by his high charges; but whose last delighted accents, on leaving the counting-house, after a full hour's conversation, have been—"Now recollect, Mr. Manton, you promise me that double gun, on your last new principle, within six weeks—to be despatched

as per address just given." The worthy censor had forgotten his errand, and knew not that he had been all the while under the wand of the enchanter who, as usual, had—

"Framed a spell, and the work was done!"

Whilst my large gun was being forged at Fullerd's, Joe, as well as some other first-raters, went purposely to take a peep at it, when he expressed himself much pleased with its proportions. He also then assured me that "he was about to bring out a new waterproof lock which would eclipse everything of the kind that had hitherto appeared." "It will," added he, "fire under water; indeed, so long as you keep the muzzle out of the water, you may, if you like, use the stock as an oar in pushing your shooting punt forwards; the gun will still go off for certain!" Whether this new plan was ever brought before the public or not, I am ignorant, but must confess that, at the time it was thus fluently described to me by its projector, I privately entertained opinions of my own respecting it, which subsequent experience has not given me occasion to alter.

Yet, let not the reader imagine that I would breathe one syllable of reflection on the memory of Joe, with whose guns I have often shot. For much as has been said and written respecting him by Mr. Daniel and other succeeding sporting authors, yet no eulogy, I believe, has ever exceeded his deserts.

As a practical workman he was below mediocrity; but as a great general is the head, and not the hands, so, as a master gunmaker, he was unrivalled. No man understood the principles of his business better than he; no man was a better judge of gun-work and the gun, or had a finer taste. And if, occasionally, he might get credit for an invention, which, in strictness of speech, was not altogether his own, his tact was such, that he rarely, if ever, recommended any novelties in gunnery to the public of which either party had just cause to repent.

The encomia he received, whilst living, were such as might have satiated the most ravenous glutton for fame. But after all these, and all his posthumous eulogies, no sentiment, perhaps, was ever more complimentary, or declaratory of his real merit, than the following frank avowal made to me, nearly thirty years ago, by a then rising gunmaker, now *nulli secundus*, who was himself the first practical workman of his day, and who, in every other respect, is, perhaps, but little, if anything, inferior to the mighty founder himself, his volubility only excepted: "But for him we should all of us have been a parcel of blacksmiths." Such is the praise due to the

man "who first breaks the road to science," attains perfection, establishes the prices, and keeps them up.

No. 8.—Page 370.

The regard, amounting almost to veneration, which many sportsmen evince for the horse that has carried them, or the dog they have shot to, for a long succession of years, is not calculated to excite surprise; but that this feeling should be transferred to *inanimate* objects, such as the gun they have shot with, the canoe which has borne them, &c., seems, at first, almost as marvellous as that the maid of France should have fallen in love with the marble Apollo! And yet all this is in our nature. Nay, even bipeds less lively than "animated bust," and not quite so handsome and dignified as Apollo Belvidere, find maidens kind enough to commiserate their forlorn and hapless condition.

Perhaps one of the most striking instances on record of this devotedness and passion for timber, occurred a few years ago, during the great storm of September 1, 1833; when, probably, the highest sea ever known in that latitude,* and certainly at that season of the year, was witnessed on the eastern coast of Britain. An open boat from Preston Pans, in Scotland, laden with oysters to within six inches of the gunwale, appeared off Seaton Carew. She was visible from the land at intervals only, as she rode over the breakers about a mile from shore; for the sea was then breaking as far as the eye could reach; and, to all appearance, each moment was about to be her last. She, however, continued to live, and ultimately the crew, consisting of five such men as are rarely, if ever, seen together in any craft, large or small, were taken out by the Scarborough life-boat. On reaching shore, their own safety appeared to have been an almost secondary consideration with these fine fellows, all of whom, casting upbraiding frowns on the raging element, gave vent to the deepest expressions of regret that their boat could not have been towed ashore, and declared that, "if she had been saved, they would have returned home in her, have *hung her up, and gilded her!*"

Bravo! auld Scotland; love of British oak is an honest passion.

No. 9.—Page 373.

In the summer of 1832, when on my road to Poole, I spent about twenty minutes at Keyhaven, with Mr. Reed, of whom Colonel Hawker

* So powerful was the wind on this occasion, that when an oar got out of the rowlock, it was as much as two of the men could do to replace it.

has spoken so highly as a finished puntist and coast-shooter. I found him very civil and communicative, and an intelligent-looking man. In person he is tall and slender, and doubtless wiry, and a laster, but yet struck me as being a *Reed* somewhat shaken by the *wind*. Launching and night-shooting are very harassing, and of these he has had his share.

From him I learned that the Colonel's large gun and canoe were not to be viewed by strangers, without written authority from head quarters. I was, however, extremely pleased with the situation which appears to have been made for the purpose. The Colonel was then engaged in fitting up a very neat, commodious, and snug shooting-box close to the water's edge; and I much regretted want of time to have taken a rough sketch of the whole, as the *tout ensemble*, including the boat-house, would have formed a pleasing and, I need not add, very interesting scene in a sporting point of view.

It is to be hoped that the Colonel himself, or some other sportsman, will yet give the sporting world a sketch of the wild fowl shooting establishment at Keyhaven.

Reed, however, was determined that I should not be altogether disappointed. To make some amends, therefore, for his inability to show me the gigantic craft and gun, he conducted me to an outbuilding, when, pointing to a long, narrow canoe, fixed aloft during the gunning vacation, he exclaimed, "*That* is *my* canoe!"

I was sorry to learn that the Colonel had, at one time, met with much opposition from a gunner on the coast there; because, as a sporting author of such celebrity, he ought to have a claim to a patent of exemption from such annoyances, being a sort of public property or privileged man, I had almost said a "*Licensed* Hawker."

No. 10.—Page 394.

THE DUNLIN.

(*Tringa Alpina*, Lin.—*La Brunette*, Buff.)

"This bird," says Bewick, "is nearly of the size of the judcock,* and its bill is of the same shape, but much shorter in proportion to the bulk; it may also be easily distinguished among its associates, the purres, dotterels, sanderlings, &c., by the redness of the upper parts of its plumage; the ground colour of which, from the beak to the rump, is ferruginous, or rusty red; but the middle of each feather is black, and the edges of some of them are narrowly fringed with yellowish white, or ash-coloured grey; in

* To the best of my recollection, all the dunlin I shot in the Tees Bay were larger than the judcock.

some specimens the lesser wing coverts are dingy, ash-coloured brown; in others they are of a clear brown, edged with ferruginous rather deeply; the quills and greater coverts are dark brown, the latter deeply tipped with white, which, together with the bases of the secondaries, form an oblique bar across the extended wings; the primaries, except the first three, are edged on the exterior webs with white; their shafts are also mostly white, and each feather is sharply pencilled, and distinctly defined with a light colour about the tips; a darkish spot covers each side of the head from the corners of the mouth, and a pale streak passes from the bill over each eye; the throat and fore part of the neck, to the breast, are of a yellowish white, mottled with brown spots; a dusky, crescent-shaped patch, the feathers of which are narrowly edged with white, covers the breast, the horns pointing towards the thighs; the belly and vent are white; the middle tail-feathers black, edged with ferruginous; the others pale ash, edged with white; legs and thighs black. The female is rather larger than the male, but in other respects resembles him pretty nearly."

No. 11.—Page 395.

The noblest of the *anas* tribe, the canvass-back duck, is to be found on Duck Island, Chesapeake Bay; and the estimation in which it is held may be gathered from the fact that, in Baltimore market, the price of a single duck is one shilling, whilst the common wild ducks are but three-pence a couple. The former has been acclimated in Britain, and why the breed has not been more extensively encouraged is somewhat surprising, as they are sizeable and handsome birds, and, as a table luxury, most delicious.

"This peculiar species of *ana*, and by far the finest I ever tasted," says a contributor to the "Sporting Magazine" for December, 1833, "is not only peculiar to America, but to certain parts of it; they are the boast and the glory of the Susquehannah and Potowmac, as well as of the American gourmand."

No. 12.—Page 409.

The following is the dressing for the outside of a skiff, or other light pleasure-boat, and which may answer for the bottom of a canoe also.

First, scrape off the old dressing till the wood is bright; then boil in an iron pot a sufficient quantity of tallow and rosin, or about one-third part of the former to three parts of the latter, and lay it on the boat hot with a brush. When the wood is well covered, a pan of heated charcoal must be held against it until the composition is remelted, and which can then be smoothed with the brush like varnish.

N. B. Be careful to keep the brush soft by letting it remain near the fire; and do not hold the charcoal against the wood long enough to burn it, as the stain never comes out even by scraping.

You will, of course, want a boat-scraper and a dressing pan, which are best procured from the boat-builder.

No. 13.—Page

Some few years ago, an extensive harbour, to be called "Port William," in honour of our late good "sailor king," was projected at Redcar. The great depth of the sea there, at low water; the opportunity of founding the piers, &c., on the rocks;* the paucity of harbours betwixt the Frith of Forth and the Humber, none of which can be safely taken in very stormy weather, when most needed; the superior local advantages of Redcar, &c.; afford powerful arguments in favour of such contemplated harbour being carried into execution. But though all admit the evils to be thus remedied, and the benefits to be thus secured, yet John Bull alone could furnish the gilt shillings requisite for the undertaking; and the said John will not always come down with the dust when it is his duty so to do. There are many John Bulls of this sort all over England, besides the old original "John," God bless him!

"Port Victoria" would sound as well, and as auspiciously; and let us yet indulge the hope, one of these days, to see the first ship enter the new port with flying colours, and that we may live to quaff a bumper of port or two on the occasion.

No. 14.—Page 449.

A decisive illustration of this was witnessed a few years ago at Redcar, when, during a tremendous storm and consequent heavy sea, no less than ninety wild ducks were washed ashore; some dead, others in a state of stupor, and a few so far recovered as to be able to elude the grasp of a host of pilots and others, who, among them, contrived to secure a considerable number. The philosophers in that country, puzzled to devise the cause of this unnatural phenomenon, or apparently suicidal act on the part of the ducks, would have it, that their dread from former cannonadings in the Tees Bay had determined them to brave any storm at sea sooner than "the pitiless pelting" of fresh showers of shot in harbour. But, as it was within the recollection of several people at Seaton, that a similar occurrence

* At present these rocks are very dangerous: no less than eleven ships suffered on them during the year 1838; and one steamer, with a number of passengers on board, had nearly experienced a similar fate.

had taken place there about eighteen years before, it seems rational to seek out some other cause to account for this calamity among these aquatic fowl.

My own conjecture then was, and still is, that the same wind which lashed the sea into fury, brought also fresh flocks of ducks from the north; which, either alighting among birds of their own kind, were, after a long flight, too much fatigued to follow them elsewhere, or among the scoters, which are quite at home at sea in all weathers, drifted in shore, and got taken in before they were aware of "breakers ahead." And I am the more disposed to favour this conclusion from having on one occasion, during a storm, stood on the cliff at Seaton, watching a mixed flock of ducks and scoters riding over the culminating waves close in shore, to all appearance as unconcerned as though "their home were on the deep;" when occasionally some of the former would receive rude buffets, which appeared to stun them so much as to render their attempts to rise almost powerless. When a bird thus roughly handled, and before he can have time to recover himself, is driven rapidly forward by a strong wind and tide into a smothering surf, there is nothing surprising in his being soon drowned, or in his reaching shore in a state of insensibility. And that birds which are occasionally seen at vast distances from land, will sometimes perish even out at sea is certain; for once, after a violent storm, many stormy petrels were washed ashore on the Seaton beach, where I picked up three myself within the distance of a few yards only of each other.

No. 15.—Page 450.

It delights me to be enabled to inform the reader, that the Doctor—after having been master in a public school for upwards of half a century—now no less than eighty years of age, hearty, and almost as young looking as ever, has recently entered a second time into the married state—an octogenarian feat (if, indeed, it were reverent in an old pupil so to speak) savouring, surely, of the "adventurous." Be this as it may, he carries with him into retirement the unfeigned and fervent good wishes of *all* who ever had the happiness to know him, and of none more than the humble author of this memorial. Well do I remember parting with my friend and worthy preceptor, when I bade my last and painful adieu to the ancient walls of Repton Priory.

"Ah! happy years, again who would not be a boy?"

How he then tendered me, as was his wont to all (to none did he ever vouchsafe more), the first two fingers only of his right hand; and thus, whilst the half-strangled tear of sensibility stood glistening in his eye,

observed—"Lacy, had you been attentive whilst you have been here, I should have made something of you; but, like the great Dr. Darwin, you will one day exclaim, 'I wish I had taken pains whilst I was at Repton'—I have, however, my regards for you still." "Ah, good Doctor!" thought I—"if ever I prove half such a fellow as he, I need not regret my idleness whilst here." But, alas!—as all my Repton contemporaries well know — my natural sporting propensities, "bred in the bone," absorbed, even then, my every consideration; and, hence, instead of having turned out a philosophic Darwin, I have turned out—oh! reader, let me crave the utmost latitude of thine indulgence—naught but a Modern Shooter.

One word more ere we part:—

Care, venerande preceptor, vive valeque.

No. 16.—Page 452.

In many cases, the gunner will do well to keep the gun loaded with powder only, as the loading with *it* occupies some time, and, when done in a hurry, is apt to be imperfectly done; but a shot cartridge, with the wadding at the top of it, is, at any time, popped in and rammed home in next to no time. By this means you can suit the size and quantity of your shot to the kind of weather you are about to shoot in—the kind of birds you are about to shoot at—the probability, from their position, as to your being able to approach near to them, or the contrary, &c. But if you be loaded already, and the shot be of the wrong sort, you have the time-consuming operation of drawing it to submit to.

In case of any suspicion that the gun will miss fire, the best plan, generally, is to draw her, flush her off, rub her out, and load again immediately.

No. 17.—Page 453.

This said Anthony Hunter was a very Hercules in build, and could almost carry a coble on his back; but, alas! in going aboard a ship, in this same Tees Bay, as a pilot, he slipped from the plank, fell into the water, and was drowned. His father and brothers, who reside at Hartlepool and Seaton, are all fine men, and, like himself, have been often distinguished by feats alike daring and humane in saving the crews of vessels wrecked in a storm.

No. 18.—Page 455.

Shooting at a large target, in windy weather, will best instruct the gunner as to the proper degree of allowance to be then made; and, if unaccustomed to such trials, the deflection of the shot will astonish him not a little.

I have mislaid my notes on this subject, but should say that, in a strong breeze—when you have to shoot across wind—two feet and a half to windward, at the least, should be allowed at a hundred yards, as, at that distance, the body of the charge will be driven that much to leeward of the line of aim.

By neglecting, or, rather, forgetting, to pay due attention to this when I commenced shooting with a large gun—and then it was that, on the whole, I had by far the best chances of fine shots—for, not long afterwards, I had to contend with the fiercest opposition—I made some few execrably bad shots, getting, perhaps, but five or six at the leeward edge of a fine flock, instead of cutting a lane through their centre, and prostrating them right and left. The like rule applies to flying shots.

No. 19.—Page 467.

Sophocles calls the sea, *αννκτος, without night, sleepless:* a fine epithet. But "the poet peer," and "peerless poet,"—the majestic-minded Byron—applies a word to the sea of even still greater beauty, force, and sublimity. Thus—

> "Roll on, thou deep and dark blue ocean—roll!
> Unchangeable save to thy wild waves' play—
> Time writes no wrinkle on thine azure brow—
> Such as creation's dawn beheld, thou rollest now."

Reader, one moment's reflection—I ask no more—on the mutability of all earthly things!

Think of the massive column and the magic tower which once arrested every step, and enthralled every eye;—what now are they? Dust—the sport of the wind! Think of that thing of flesh and blood called human friendship;—how

> "The attachment of years in a moment expires!"

Mark!—drop no briny tear—but mark the

> "Alter'd eye of hard unkindness!"

Mark tergiversation in the dark hour of adversity!—and say—THEN say—what a word—what an immortal word is that "UNCHANGEABLE!"

No. 20.—Page 467.

The Greatham flight-shooters, ludicrously enough, will have it, that the hen widgeon calls out "tak (take) care!" as a warning to her less wary companions. And when the former of these two words is pronounced pretty quickly, and the latter long, and very roughly aspirated, the note of the bird could not, perhaps, be better imitated. As for that beautiful bird,

the cock widgeon, in a pretty, plaintive, clear whistle, he says, "Whew!" as plainly as it can be uttered; and hence his name.

No. 21.—Page 479.

It is during times like these that the newspapers are full of—"Acres of birds have been seen on our coasts;" and when "one gentleman of the most undoubted veracity bagged his couple of hundred 'birds,' at two shots, assisted by his faithful water-spaniel, Carlo, who died from over exertion in picking them up!" May be larks or oxbirds, then tame enough to have been tail-salted.

At such times, numbers of birds are even caught or killed with sticks, being in the last stage of weakness from starvation; and some, too, may be picked up which have been actually frozen to death. In the winter of 1838 there was no lack of relations of these marvellous performances on the coast. Among others, one gentleman had "killed sixty ducks at a shot in the river Tees," from which wild ducks were evidently meant to be inferred. But I happen to know that the most ducks, of any kind, bagged at one shot in the Tees, during the whole of that winter, were "thirty-five *scaup* ducks out of an immense flock"—a shot which any experienced gunner would, at any time, and especially in very severe weather, sooner expect to make, than to bag even a similar number of wild ducks, much less nearly double that number!

For my own part, as regards nearly all shots in very severe weather, I confess I attach comparatively but little merit to them. If a man have a Scotch or a Cheshire acre of any kind of wild birds, more than half-starved, to shoot at, and these standing as "close huddled, wing to wing," as they well *can* stand, and to which, with little trouble, and less skill, he can approach as near as he pleases, or, at all events—and which amounts to the same thing—as near as he could wish, he must be a luckless wight, indeed, if he can prevent himself from butchering a vast number. But for how many of these would he have had to find room in his canoe in open weather?—in open weather, when birds are vigilant and shy of approach, appear in much smaller flocks, and sit farther apart from each other—are full fleshed and strong, and, in fact, take as much more killing. Give me the man who can pretty frequently bag his ten ducks or twenty widgeon at a shot in open weather, and he may be trusted to load his canoe in seasons of severity. During the latter, indeed, many of the birds are so dog poor that it is almost a pity, and, in my opinion, scarcely sportsmanlike, to kill them; for though duck and widgeon—especially the latter—do retain a certain degree of condition in a surprising manner for a time, yet, after

that, they lose flesh rapidly, till, at length, their feathers may be said to be the only valuable part about them; in other words, they are then not worth powder and shot.

No. 22.—Page 480.

Hornsea Mere, situate a few miles south of Bridlington, in the East Riding of the county of York, is a fine lake, or sheet of water, covering nearly five hundred acres. Though immediately contiguous to the sea, it is fed entirely by fresh water springs, is studded with islands clothed with timber, and, in some parts, is very deep. Under certain restrictions it once was open to the public, and was then the favourite resort of the disciples of Walton, who repaired thither from all parts, far and near; especially on account of the very superior pike-fishing for which it has always been noted: but for many years past, the liberty to fish having been grossly abused, it has been closely preserved by the owner, the Rev. Charles Constable, of Wassand, in order the more decisively to establish his own exclusive right to the fishing as well as to the water—a right most unequivocal, but which, at one time, was partially disputed. Indeed, he has been compelled to confine the fishing to visitors staying at his house, which commands a beautiful vista-peep of the Mere. I am personally acquainted with some of those who have enjoyed this privilege, all of whom declare that, for pike, if not for perch, it stands wholly unrivalled. Indeed, if you strike a jack, he is almost certain to be swallowed by some leviathan of the species before you can land him. Pike thirty pounds in weight have been taken here; and these, probably, are but of moderate size when compared with the great uncaught monarch of the Mere.

Two youths, making no pretensions to any particular skill as trollers, caught, in one morning, in this water, nine pike, averaging thirteen pounds weight each.

There is nothing like quiet and seclusion for encouraging the breed of all kinds of game and wild fowl, especially of the latter; and the vigilance of the owner of Hornsea Mere—who certainly has a right to be "chief constable" there—has proved as favourable to the increase of the fowl as of the fish; for, in addition to all the common sorts of wild fowl, many of the rarer species have been known to breed on the Mere, which abounds in reed-beds. Nay, I have been informed, that instances are not wanting of even the golden eyes having remained for that purpose.

Wright and Co., Printers, Fleet Street.